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BOMBING AND STATESMANSHIP

Mussolini's frightened outburst was an effort to rally the Italian people by terrifying them. The Allies, he says, will carve up and starve Italy, will ruin her industries and shipping and leave the Italians only their eyes to weep with. Incidentally, Mussolini let us know that a large strike had occurred in Turin; anti-Fascist Italians are apparently more powerful than the world has so far been inclined to believe. Perhaps he will also tell us next time he speaks about a number of Germans reported killed in a railway accident staged by Italian patriots and about riots and acts of sabotage said to have occurred in Milan and other large northern towns. This speech would appear to make the Allied propaganda line much more simple. Mr. Roosevelt has made a generous pronouncement which we hope reached the Italian people; he has assured them that Allied intentions are friendly to the mass of Italians. It is surely time for a far more concrete statement from Mr. Churchill; full use should also be made of Italians outside and inside Italy who are known to be enemies of the Fascist regime. To convince Italians that we do not intend to cut up their territory or impose crippling burdens on them in the future is as certainly a part of the necessary preparatory work for invasion as most of the bombing which is now in process. The subjection of Pantellaria by bombing has not been an unmitigated advantage. There is now a tendency to believe that any military objective can be "softened" by intensive bombing. It may have the reverse effect unless coupled with propaganda also conducive to "softening" Italian willingness to fight for a Fascist Government.

To-day, when Allied air power is dominant, the opportunity for statesmanship grows. It is tempting to use this great weapon indiscriminately, and it is easy for politicians and publicists to forget that possession of the initiative carries with it responsiblities for the future. The stronger we are, the more opportunity we have for choosing our targets. Already newspapers that, in the days when war might have been prevented, were ready to lick the boots of the German and Italian dictators, are beginning to indulge in an orgy of vengeful propaganda, which distracts the public mind from real problems. The cheapest form of popularity at this stage of the war is to dramatise the struggle into a scrap between personified nations. If this war were indeed merely waged against Hitler, Mussolini, Göring and Goebbels and the rest, the prospect of making a speedy bonfire of them would trouble no one's conscience. Unfortunately, the leaders are those least likely to be hit by a campaign of destruction. The problem that confronts the responsible leaders of democracy is not how to score off a parcel of boasting gangsters but how to save a civilisation from destruction.

It is only in a cartoonist's world that this war can be properly shown as a struggle between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin on the one side and Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo on the other. Mr. Eden should have avoided encouraging this crude imagery when, in answering questions about bombing Rome, he said that the responsibility would be the Duce's, since "nobody invited Signor Mussolini to attack France and nobody invited him to attack London." Would Mr. Eden wish to read in the works of a future Gibbon some such footnote as this.

> In these final bombardments many thousands of Italians who would certainly have surrendered if the opportunity had been theirs were unfortunately buried beneath the ruins of the Eternal City; the irreplacable and irremovable works of Raphael and Angelo were scattered into a thousand fragments; Assisi, city of St. Francis, was obliterated by an unfortunate accident; Venice, eldest child of liberty, regarded by our ancestors as the loveliest work of man, was once more merged into the sea from which her ingenious architects had raised her. The responsibility for these misfortunes which in a few days deprived the human race of the finest fruits of its genius, was attributed to a long forgotten dictator named Mussolini. The British Foreign Secretary of that time, Mr. Eden, was able to explain by way of self-exculpation, that the blame for what would otherwise have seemed to posterity an act of vandalism could only be laid at the door of the Italian dictator, whose boasts and posturings had led him gratuitously to threaten the Metropolis of the British Empire.

This is no satirical picture. Violence is progressive and as power develops it becomes increasingly difficult for those who wield it and who have known the bitterness of being its victims, to show restraint and discrimination in its use. Bombing, preparatory to invasion, is necessary. Civilian life will inevitably be forfeited; much that is valuable will inevitably perish. We do not suggest that Mr. Eden should have reassured the Italians that Rome would be free from attack by the British and American air forces. But everything should be done to make such an assault (which incidentally would make enemies of the most friendly Italians) unnecessary, by urging that Rome be made an open city; far greater attention than was possible earlier in the war should be paid to the position of common people, and far more care be taken than before not to do damage that is irreparable. We are no longer in the position of 1940 when we could think only in terms of dire military necessity. Everything in this war can be called a military objective; choice of target must include other considerations than those of immediate military expediency. Statesmanship to-day can afford to forgo small military advantages for the sake of post-war gains. A politician at this stage of the war can easily earn the kind of glory that for a few days shone round the heads of Horatio Bottomley and Pemberton Billing in 1918. More enviable is the reputation of an Abraham Lincoln who rose to the height of his opportunity by refusing in the day of success to allow the public to forget the high objects for which the war was supposed to be fought. Mr. Churchill ended his speech at the Guildhall last week with a fine passage in which he repudiated thoughts of vengeance which would "tarnish our honour" in the days of victory. Mr. Churchill has shown great qualities as a fighter and leader in this war; as a historian he knows that great victories are often thrown away in the peace. Perhaps he also knows, as Lincoln knew, and as Mr. Lloyd-George discovered, that things may be said during war that cannot be remedied by any show of magnanimity in the Peace.

The Battle Fronts

On two fronts this month has already brought a resumption of activity. Last Monday the Germans delivered attacks in considerable strength and supported by massive tank concentrations, against the salient held by the Red Army west of Kursk. German communiques and propaganda have so far tended to "play down" the magnitude of the operation—a tendency which signifies either a cautious view of prospects or reluctance to break the news to the German people that a further terrible tale of casualties on the Eastern Front is to be expected. Until the extent of the enemy's commitments becomes clearer, it is difficult to appreciate his intentions, or to divine whether this is a repetition of Ludendorf's last desperate offensive in 1918, or a limited, though clearly substantial attack designed to hamper and delay Russian offensive preparations. Meanwhile, on the Pacific Front, Allied forces under General MacArthur appear definitely to have captured the initiative. The success which has attended the first phase of operations against the Japanese-held islands and air bases south of New Britain warrants hopes that a limit at any rate has been set to Japanese expansion in the South-west Pacific.

General Sikorski

Through four years the Polish nation has been overwhelmed by tragedies so enormous that they dwarf any single loss. But in General Sikorski it had a political leader of sagacity and moderation and a soldier of distinction. His sudden end robs it of a head who at least kept at bay the most intransigeant Polish exiles. He came from the part of Poland which fell at the partition to Austria, a more kindly and incomparably less illiberal ruler than either Prussia or the Tsardom. Perhaps for this reason he did not feel as furiously as the Poles of the former Grand Duchy that traditional hatred of everything Russian, which poisons their relations even with the Soviet Union of to-day. That he desired and would have tried to reach a reconciliation, we do not doubt. What we all remember about him is the courage and decision he showed in his exile in Paris, when at the darkest hour he rallied all who could join him to carry on the struggle for liberation. The gallantry of the force he got together, in the air, at sea and in Africa has won a universal respect, which will always be associated with his name. This ill chance may now have brought to the head of Polish affairs a peasant leader, M. Mikolajczyk, whose party may be destined to play a leading part in the democratic republic of tomorrow.

A New New Deal

One of the casualties of the congressional attack upon the President is the National Resources Development Board. Meanwhile a part of their latest report, *A Post-war Plan and Program for the United States of America*, has been reprinted by the Stationery Office. It is suffused with a vision of the enormous productive capacity of the American economy and of the paramount need to maintain effective demand at a level which will keep it running. The plan proposes an enlargement of Government expenditure, partly through federal agencies and partly by grants-in-aid to State and local authorities, far in excess of anything attempted under the first New Deal. It sets out an impressive list of projects of capital development. Transport and the provision of power should be taken over by Federal agencies, or by mixed corporations representing the Government and stockholders side by side. Land conservation, flood control, drainage and irrigation should be carried out with Federal assistance. There should be a national programme for housing and urban development and for medical and educational services. The relative failure of the first New Deal in its early stages was due to the fact that total government outlay really increased very little. States and Municipalities reduced their deficits as Federal expenditure increased. The authors of the present report are fully aware of the need for over-all planning. But they make no attempt to draw their various proposals together in quantitative terms or to estimate what rate of government expenditure is likely to be required to provide full employment, and how far it should be financed by borrowing and how far by taxation.

Nor do they discuss the danger of overshooting the mark, or contemplate the inflationary tendencies inherent in a situation of full employment and scarcity of labour. In fact, they do not envisage full employment being maintained by adjusting the rate of expenditure. They contemplate that the level of effective demand generated by private enterprise and government outlay on capital development and social security would normally be insufficient to provide work for all, but that the otherwise unemployed would be given jobs of a socially useful character by an extension of the Public Work Administration which provides a superior kind of "relief work." This policy would avoid the worst misery of unemployment without altogether depriving industry of a "reserve army of labour."

To overcome the danger of restrictive monopoly the Planning Board makes various proposals for helping the small business, by provision of cheap finance and centralised research. Care must be taken, when government-owned war factories are disposed of, to distribute them so as to keep competition alive. The anti-trust laws must be more vigorously enforced. Where the economies of large-scale production make it undesirable to break up monopolies, "the remedy must lie in effective social control." This part of the Report is less convincing than that which deals with the maintenance of effective demand, and, while the authors seem fully aware of the menace of monopoly, the remedies they propose appear somewhat meagre.

The authors rely upon the enthusiasm which their vision will evoke to be so great "that even the faint hearted and those who profit from instability will be swept along." To judge from the present mood of Congress, it seems that there is a good deal of sweeping to be done.

Government and Industry

It is interesting to compare the American *Post-war Plan* with a British document which covers the same ground. Nuffield College has published a report on *Employment Policy and Organisation of Industry After the War*, which is the result of discussions between business men, trade unionists and academies. There is internal evidence of a sincere, though not always completely successful, struggle to reconcile conflicting points of view, and the highest common factor which has been found is higher than might have been expected.

In dealing with employment policy the main emphasis is laid on the need for over-all investment control. "The State in drawing up its investment policy will have in view a list of priorities, balanced to cover the needs of the home population and of export trade, and to provide for the adequate capitalisation of industry and agriculture in pursuance of a clearly conceived national plan of economic development." To carry out such a policy it is necessary very much to widen the sphere of direct control over the great capital-using industries, and it is tentatively suggested that public utilities and all forms of transport should be taken into public ownership and operated by non-profit-making corporations, while building of all kinds will be carried out mainly in response to orders placed by the Government, municipalities and other public agencies. This is a very considerable advance upon the view of "public works" as a mere device to counteract slump conditions and keep private industry profitable. For major industries which are not placed under Public Corporations the report proposes Industrial Boards composed of representatives of industry, including labour representatives, with a chairman and at least two members appointed by the Government. These boards should fulfil many of the functions of Trade Associations, but should not have power to restrict new entry or to fix minimum prices except with the authority of the appropriate Minister, who would be advised by an Industrial Tribunal composed of independent experts. This represents an attempt to take the monopoly bull by the horns. At this time of day it seems vain to rely, as the American plan does, merely upon fostering competition by small businesses. Trade Associations have come to stay, and as things are, they contain all the worst features of monopoly without the counter-balancing advantage of high efficiency which the great trusts at least potentially provide. The authors of the report evidently feel that, instead of trying to break up the monopolies, it is better to control them in the public interest. The recognition of the need for control is a welcome change from the claims for "self-government of industry" put forward by the F.B.I. and the 120 industrialists (some of whose names reappear among the supporters of this report). But it is open to doubt how far the proposed control would be able to turn the great industries into servants of the public. Independent chairmen, and even Ministers, have a curious way of becoming identified (without any sordid personal motives) with the industries they have to control, and it is to be feared that the set-up here proposed might do little more than provide a halo for Trade Associations. Whatever its concrete proposals amount to, however, the document is an interesting sign that some at least of the great industrialists are prepared to admit the need for control, and fear another slump even more than they fear a certain loss of independence.

Parliament and Forestry (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The Clayton case caused great disquiet in the House as well as in the country, and many Tory M.P.s appeared likely to back the demand of Bellinger and other Labour men for an outside inquiry into the running of military detention camps. Grigg wisely promised an inquiry under the chairmanship of a judge into the administration of all "glasshouses."

The House was at its best in the discussion of the Report on Post-war Forestry, when many Members sought to speak; most of the contributions were of value. Courthope and Quibell, Tory and Labour spokesmen respectively for the Forestry Commission, made out a strong case both on grounds of security and on the ground that there is likely to be a shortage of world supplies after the war, which makes it wise for this country to increase its forest assets. Some Members thought rightly that more attention should be given to the planting of shelter belts and the maintenance of the small deciduous woods which give the English countryside its character. But a strong case was certainly made for the main proposal to plant a large part of our derelict heaths and hillsides with the softwoods which form 94 per cent. of our peacetime consumption, and which our wet climate enables us to produce better than most other countries.

Jowitt refused to commit the Government save to financial continuity in any policy they accepted. Here again the Government's last word is to depend on their financial commitments as a whole. Rumour says that a battle behind the scenes is in full progress as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Scottish Department of Agriculture want to partition and swallow the Forestry Commission. It was, however, powerfully argued that a unified and independent commission is required if forestry is to progress against the established agricultural interests, and if the necessary finances are to be forthcoming to plant up a reasonable acreage in Scotland where so large a part of the suitable land is situated. This brings to a head the need for having economic plans which cover the whole island but with widespread devolution in administration. The example of the Soviet Union should be followed in combining cultural autonomy for organic parts with a central economic plan built on the needs of the whole.

THE FUTURE OF FRANCE

The affairs of the French are again an occasion of deep anxiety to us all. Sometimes amid these prolonged disputes we seem to be suffering from too much publicity, but the blaze of revelation is always partial, and we never come to the end of the mysteries, the half-truths and the perilous reticences. More than once in these columns we have rejoiced too soon at some success for unity, only to realise a few days later that much less had been gained than we had supposed. The latest events, since the intervention of General Eisenhower in the discussions at Algiers, followed by the visit of General Giraud to Washington, raise questions for the United Nations so grave that it is a duty to survey the outlook with all the frankness we can command. This American action has led to an impressive declaration of protest from most of the organised parties of the movement of resistance. It has been criticised in the severest terms by Mr. Lippman and other American journalists. Unquestionably it is easy to put an unfortunate and even sinister interpretation upon it. In fairness let us begin by recognising that there was a case for it. Though the meetings of the National Committee had registered some progress and reached some most salutary decisions, the disputes over the command seemed as intractable as they were interminable. This was injurious to the prestige of all concerned, and may have threatened the discipline and morale of the French army in Africa, which may soon be engaged in action. So General Eisenhower cut the knot by recognising General Giraud and no one else as its commander. This seemed to withdraw it altogether from the control of the National Committee. Subject only to the American generalissimo General Giraud seems now to command it in his own right. His position remains, to be sure, highly ambiguous. He is still, with de Gaulle, one of the two presidents of this Committee. But he faces it with a powerful army under him with which (subject to the American High Command) he can do as he wishes.

The case is all the graver when we recollect that many of the high officers of this army are said to be Fascists, and that a large proportion of the men are native Africans. The invitation to Washington was a further sign of favour, all the more marked because the State Department has always treated de Gaulle and "the so-called Free French," as it once called them, with undisguised coldness. This was a maladroit act, since it makes Giraud look, however little he may deserve this suspicion, like the nominee of a foreign Power. It is likely to cause an even more decided rally of French opinion to the side of de Gaulle. Worst of all, it may lessen the hope of an eventual understanding, not merely between the two generals, but—a much graver matter—between the army and the civilian movement of resistance. (For the same reason we regret the suppression of de Gaulle's organ, *La Marseillaise*, deplorable though its polemics often were). If these discords continue, the process by which the French people determine, after their liberation, their own future destinies will be stormy and difficult, and they may end by sapping the friendship which should bind them in the years to come with the Americans and ourselves.

If nothing more were at stake than a personal rivalry between two generals, we might dismiss the whole controversy with impatience and indifference. The personal equation has to be considered. De Gaulle is what the other man is not, emphatically a "leader," who sees himself and is regarded by his adherents not merely as a soldier who was right when most of his profession were disastrously wrong, but also as the inspiring force and the central figure in a movement that aims at creating a new France. His courage and decision made him not merely its symbol but also its director. Until the other day he could act only as a soldier and as the head of an underground movement. Both of these activities call for a centralised and secret authority, and this, in a sense rightly and inevitably, may have affected his bearing and outlook. The struggle within France is a conspiracy: it cannot be conducted by an open and democratic procedure. His critics, not without cause, ascribe to him dictatorial or, at least, stiff-necked characteristics; and few find him easy to deal with. In short he lacks some of the first qualifications of a statesman. Much of the legend that has gathered round him in France he owes to the sane and liberal broadcasts of the B.B.C. which did not necessarily reflect his point of view. One verifiable fact should be mentioned: at one moment two of his intimates did urge the formation of a single totalitarian party under his headship, for the regeneration and rebuilding of France. But against this must be set the fact that his strength and his influence depend on the civilian movement of resistance in France which is solidly republican and democratic and predominantly of the Left. It has, indeed, its Catholic and Conservative wings as sincere and resolute as the rest, but its main body is drawn from the Socialist, Communist and Radical parties and from the underground trade unions. If we confess ourselves in any sense partisans, it is not because we would pin our faith to a leader who manifestly has his foibles and may have his ambitions. But in this underground movement, it seems to us, lies the hope that France will recover her daring, her personality, and her integrity in action and thought.

Of General Giraud we know rather less, and there may be less to be known. A Conservative, like most French officers, he has courage, and no one has ever doubted his will to resist the conquerors of his country. He is said to have little interest in politics, and small understanding of them. There, as we see it, lies the danger. An honest and simple soldier can only too easily be used for their own designs by astuter persons of his own class. This was for several months what happened to him. He agreed to serve under Darlan. He accepted as his civilian administrator the even more sinister Peyrouton. For long his plan for leading the campaign of liberation was to place it under a council composed of such leading ex-partisans of Vichy as General Noguès, M. Boisson and M. Peyrouton, together with himself. Though he did sweep away the Vichy decrees, he disfranchised the native Jews of Algeria, who had been French citizens for seventy years. That revealing injustice still stands. He delayed intolerably the release from brutally run camps of the French, and other anti-Fascist victims of Vichy. To forget all this would be unrealistic, though we gladly concede that he has since declared himself unequivocally for the Republic. Assuredly he is not the type of man who would wish to play the dictator, nor has he the gifts that would fit him for such a part. Some of his recent appointments, notably of MM. Monnet and Massigli, have won general confidence. Finally, he has pledged himself, after the liberation of French soil, to hand over his powers to a provisional government formed in accordance with the constitution.

That is not as simple as it sounds. A long-forgotten provision of the Third Republic provided for the emergency of an interregnum. It was laid down that in such an event a provisional assembly, which shall elect a provisional government, is to be formed from the *Conseils Généraux*, which correspond to our County Councils, each of which shall send two members to it. These tend to be conservative bodies, which over-represent the rural areas. They were elected in 1936, before France had passed through the cleansing fires of this war. Some of their members collaborated with Vichy and even with the enemy. Are they first to be purged, as some propose? If so, would even legality—and the plan has nothing better to commend it—be satisfied? In all the circumstances the plan has the air of providing a conservative body, drawn from the elderly France that collapsed, to check, to sterilise, and perhaps to thwart the France of youth and to-morrow. A provisional government formed from such materials, backed by the financial resources of American capitalism, distributing its foods and raw materials, while a French-African army under reactionary officers stood behind it, could do much to bias the process of self-determination in favour of property and the corrupt society which capitulated in 1940. What can be claimed for this plan is the fatal merit of continuity. The Gaullists, on the other hand, propose that the present National Committee, in which the friends of Giraud are fully represented, should itself act as the provisional government and arrange for the election of a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. It reflects the virile and creative forces of France. It is, surely, a natural and sound arrangement that those who have led the struggle for liberation should frame the questions to which the electorate will give the final answer. It may be said that the Committee is only a nominated body, while even the parties which back it cannot under the Nazi heel observe the niceties of democratic procedure. We have little doubt, however, that it and they represent the French people in its present mood very much more adequately than councils chosen seven years ago for the limited tasks of local government.

It is said that General Giraud, in accepting the invitation to Washington, sought and secured the consent of the National Committee. In that event the mischief of a clumsy act may be lessened. We hope he may secure from the United Nations, among whom Russia should have a voice as well as the two Western Powers, the recognition of the National Committee as the *de facto* government of the French people. It would be well, we think, to build up beside it a bigger consultative council including, as they become available, representative men who have a claim to speak for all the organised groups of militant France. It ought to be made clear that General Giraud, while he must in all military operations act under General Eisenhower, is the servant and subordinate of the civil power, embodied in the National Committee. It is obvious that the armed forces of France must be under a single command—in other words, that de Gaulle's little army must not stand apart. Notorious Fascist generals should be retired. The rather absurd arrangement under which Generals de Gaulle and Giraud preside on alternate days over the National Committee can hardly continue indefinitely. Gaullists might well argue that, if Giraud has the military command, de Gaulle should have the presidency. But if feelings run too high for that, then it would surely be wiser to choose a neutral chairman. If de Gaulle is the man to whom, on his merits and record, the liberated France of to-morrow wishes to confer leadership, such office will one day fall to him, if he can retain her confidence and admiration. What is fatal is that the Western Governments, one or both of them, should weight the scales against him, or seem to do so. The record of the State Department in its dealings with France—and the same thing is true, we fear, of Italy and Spain—makes sense only on the assumption that it is afflicted by a haunting dread of radicalism and tries to buttress property even at the risk of sacrificing political democracy. If it continues in this course it probably will, by its clumsiness, defeat its own ends. But in the meanwhile it will perpetuate civil strife among the French and destroy their traditional friendship for the land of Franklin and Jefferson. It would be well that both Washington and London should remember that, low as France fell, she has before given proof of astonishing powers of recovery. In the European family of to-morrow she may again play a great role. Doubtful though we may feel about the statesmanship and political sagacity of General de Gaulle, it is in the movement of resistance behind him that the living and creative forces of the future are incarnated.

WHERE IS THE LABOUR PARTY GOING?

The great strength of all Right Wing parties is the fullness with which they realise that an interest is more compelling than an idea. Conservatives may have their reserves about Disraeli and the late Lord Salisbury, about Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Churchill. They may differ on religion as widely as Lord Quickswood from Sir Kingsley Wood, and on international affairs as Mr. Eden from Lord Londonderry. The great source of their authority is that, when the battle has to be fought, they are all soldiers in the same army. They have learned with magnificent amplitude the meaning of Franklin's great aphorism that they must hang together or else they will be hanged separately.

That is a lesson the parties of the Left have still to learn. There are few serious observers of politics in this country who doubt that its general mood is a progressive one. It is united in support of Mr. Churchill as War Prime Minister, but it fully understands that, with the achievement of victory, a new epoch will open in our history and that this epoch will demand large-scale reforms proportionate to the new world we shall enter. But it is not less clear that the nation has not made up its mind about the instrument or even the procedure through which the innovations shall be attempted. Very largely it is the fault of the Labour Party that this doubt exists. It has failed to learn the lesson so amply emphasised by all European experience in the inter-war years that what maintains the authority of the Right is division on the Left. That was the clear implication, not only of counter-revolution in Italy and Germany and Spain; it was the reason why the Third Republic became the France of Vichy, and why it was only as the twelfth hour was striking that Britain was saved from a similar fate. The Labour Party seems never to have understood that though "appeasement" was, in part, the outcome of a genuine horror of war, it was, in part, also, the expression of a profound sympathy with the purposes embodied in the counter-revolutions of Mussolini and Hitler. It did not, accordingly, achieve the realisation that the forces to which, on the domestic scene, it was opposed, were capable of viewing its socialist outlook from an angle not seriously different from that of the French Right towards socialists and communists in France. That Munich which, in the end, proved a crowning mercy might easily, had Hitler been less blunt in his demands on Poland, have proved a spiritual disaster.

The Labour Party had no possible alternative to acceptance of office under Mr. Churchill in 1940; had it chosen otherwise the very survival of Britain might have been impossible. But it is grimly obvious that it has not seriously faced the consequences of the Coalition. Just as the Tories used Mr. Lloyd George and victory in 1918 to disunify, and thus destroy, the forces of liberalism, so are they likely, if they can, to use Mr. Churchill and victory a generation later to destroy the progressive forces and thus perpetuate their interests while their opponents are quarrelling over their ideas. Few things ought to be more plain than the fact that British Labour and the Soviet Union have a common interest at stake. Few things, either, ought to be more plain that the fact that both enduring peace in Europe and the main chance of an economics of expansion will turn on the degree to which a defeated Germany looks for the sources of its regeneration to Moscow rather than to the City of London and to Wall Street. The very fact that, though taxation is heavy, Mr. Churchill's government has made no effective change in the disposition of economic power in this country ought to make the leaders of the Labour Party realise that, with victory, the Tories will be concerned to safeguard their traditional interests; speculation about the re-shaping of Britain is for them an interesting academic exercise without any roots in future realities. Even Mr. Churchill's four-year plan emerges, under close scrutiny, as less a body of concrete proposals than the outlines of an audacious manifesto for a khaki election. India, the Trades Disputes Act, the social ownership of the vital instruments of production, above all of the Bank of England and the land, it is by these criteria of policy now that the aim of the Tory Party can best be judged. But all of them are left untouched on the ground that they are "controversial" questions. The Labour leaders do not seem to have grasped the vital fact that because they are left untouched when the mood of the nation is ready for their resolution, these "controversial" questions are, in fact, being settled in favour of reserving as much of the *status quo* as Mr. Churchill can get away with at the next general election.

Coalition government in which the Labour Party is the very junior partner who puts over, as in the Essential Work Order, the measures no Tory minister could successfully attempt, leaves the rank and file, as the Whitsun Conference showed, with a profound sense of malaise. That was why Mr. Attlee had to give the pledge that the Conference will be consulted, after Germany's defeat, upon the issue of continuing the association of Labour ministers with Mr. Churchill. But the very fact that this consultation is to take place ought to involve the preparation by the Labour Party of the measures it will require if the Conference votes for independence. That means not merely being certain that the party's leader can stand up, at a general election, against the great hold on the nation Mr. Churchill's prestige will rightly give him, it not only means, also, that the party machinery, not least at Transport House, is ready for its task. It also means that, between now and the general election, in the first place, the voters are made fully aware of what the case for Labour is, not merely in the literature the party publishes, but in the candidates who seek to win a majority for it. And, not less important, it means, in the second place, that the millions among the electorate with no definite party affiliation, but a general sense that the time has come for a great step forward, attain the conviction that it is through the Labour Party alone that such a step can be taken.

It is surely obvious that this conviction is impossible while the Left is a congeries of warring groups which announce their dislike of one another far more loudly than they explain the disaster implied in renewing the power of the Tory Party for five years after the war is over. The way to deal with the Communist Party is not at all costs to assure its continued enmity, but to discover by discussion whether a genuine loyalty to the Labour Party is open to it. There are some very curious elements in Common Wealth, but there is no doubt that it contains also men and women whose progressivism is passionate and profound; the Labour Party's job is to win these men and women to its ranks by offering proof that, if it should win power, it has enough audacity and vigour to maintain it and not, as in 1931, abdicate from office at the first serious sign of Tory displeasure. Not least, the party must so comport itself in the House of Commons that the millions of young men and women in the Defence Services of the Crown look to it naturally for a square deal when demobilisation comes. It will not create that outlook if, every time the party decides, as in the Beveridge debate, that it cannot support the Government, its Ministers appear at the party meeting either to threaten it angrily with resignation, as in Mr. Bevin's mode, or to chide it sadly, like a disappointed governess, in Mr. Attlee's manner. Until the leaders of the Labour Party have learned that, though the country strongly supports Mr. Churchill as War Premier, but does not assume that the price of Mr. Churchill is the necessary acceptance of Sir Kingsley Wood and his like, it will suffer, as a party, from that tragic defeatism which makes it tremble every time it affirms the principles the electorate supposes it to accept. No party can make its mark upon the national mind unless it first learns the elementary duty of making up its own mind.

Above all, the Labour Party, if it wants to avoid in the coming years the fate of social democratic parties on the European Continent must learn two essential lessons. It must not be afraid of a healthy variation of opinion in the party; expulsion does it no more good on minor matters than ex-communication has benefited the Church of Rome. If it can keep Mr. Rhys Davies or Mr. Stokes, it really ought not to cavil at Miss Jennie Lee or Mr. Harry Pollitt. And it ought not to accept from its opponents the criteria by which it judges other parties of the Left. To represent the issue between the Communists and the Labour Party as a choice between the method of dictatorship and the method of democracy is not only to accept an antithesis which is historically devoid of foundation; it is also to forget the histories of Dollfuss and Franco, of Hitler and Mussolini, even, we may remind ourselves, of a British Tory Party which had no scruples, before the war of 1914, in preparing, under the aegis of its most eminent men, all the necessary technique of revolution. The task before the Labour Party is to make itself the spinal column of the immense, if unorganised, progressive forces of this country. It will not do that until it ceases to be afraid of Mr. Churchill's shadow. If he is invaluable to the country, let us be quite sure that the Labour Party is indispensable to Mr. Churchill. British democracy has survived not merely because Mr. Churchill gave it a great lead, but, not less, because the ordinary men and women of Britain followed that lead with so unbreakable a resolution. At long last, there is a real chance of reaping the reward of their courage. But the way to reap it is for the Labour Party, both in word and deed, to insist upon a definition of the end to which we are being led. The alternative before it is to provide the means whereby privilege can renew its power. If the Labour Party spoke with the full courage of its formal convictions, at long last it would provide democracy with the dynamic which would give reality to its principles. But the time is short. If the Labour Party waits till the danger is over, it will find that a fatigued electorate lacks the energy and the ardour from which great reforms emerge.

Harold J. Laski

THE DIVIDED CHRISTIAN FRONT

There is an obvious connection between the call for a Christian crusade against squalor and want made by the two Archbishops at the recent series of packed public meetings and Dr. Temple's plea for a real union between Anglicans and Free Churchmen. His Grace must be aware that the whole body of English Christians, outside the Roman Obedience, are ready to follow his personal leadership. He is trusted by Nonconformists as no other English Primate has ever been. It is, I think, true to say that a larger proportion of Nonconformists than of Anglicans subscribe to the Christian Social programme set out in the Malvern Findings, and it is certain that, with their closer association with party politics, the Nonconformists have a more realistic understanding of the only way in which the Malvern programme can be implemented.

Dr. Temple insists, and the Nonconformists agree, that to secure both spiritual freedom and economic security in the post-war world should be the contemporary mission of the Christian Church. His Grace certainly does not underestimate the difficulties that will have to be faced and overcome, and he is convinced that they cannot be overcome without genuine Christian unity. In his address to the Convocation of Canterbury, he said:—

> How can we persuade an incredulous world that we have the secret of that unity which overleaps all barriers of religious or cultural inheritance, of economic status, or of sex itself, so that we become "one man in Christ Jesus." if we present to that

world the appearance of competing sects? The obligation to attain to a real and organic unity of the Church as the Holy Spirit may guide us is urgent.

The truth is that not only is there no such "real and organic unity" but that there is no likelihood of any such unity. In the conception of the nature of the Church and the character of its ministry, the Church of England is far nearer to Rome and the Eastern Orthodoxy than it is to Protestant Nonconformity. It is true, of course, that the view of the Anglo-Catholics and of the Archbishop himself, as expressed by him in his Convocation speech, is not accepted by the whole of the clergy and laity or even by the entire bench of bishops, but, except for the small minority of extreme Protestants, few Churchmen would agree that the Anglican priest and the Nonconformist minister have the same spiritual status.

Since the Vatican's semi-alliance with Fascism and the constant attacks on the democratic idea by authoritative Roman Catholic writers, the differences between Rome and Canterbury have become mainly political. I think that they always have been, but the fact is more evident than it was when the late Lord Halifax was striving for the return of the English provinces to the Papal fold. That is no longer even discussed.

The differences between the Church and the Nonconformists are doctrinal and Dr. Temple's suggestion that they can be overcome has been denounced by the High Church organ as a "challenge to Catholics," and as "almost illimitably unsettling." It is roundly asserted that the Free Church ministries are not "real ministries of Christ's Word and Sacraments in the Universal Church" though it is rather humorously admitted that these ministries may have some efficacy since "God is not willing for the aberrant sheep, many of whom are innocent enough, to be left unpastured!"

How widely this separatism is held was shown in the Convocation debates on the proposal that Nonconformist ministers might on occasion be allowed to preach in Anglican pulpits. It was grudgingly admitted that such preaching might be sanctioned at Matins and Evensong, but never at the Service of Holy Communion, which by the way is the only service at which the Prayer Book requires that a sermon shall be delivered.

Holy Communion is the most sacred and solemn of the Church's rites. Its name suggests the ties of supernatural brotherhood, and it is here that exclusiveness must continue to be accented. It should be added that no one in the Church has ever suggested that a Nonconformist minister can possibly be the celebrant at a valid Communion. I am, myself, an Anglo-Catholic and (apologetically to myself) I share this prevailing conviction. But I do not fail to understand how it affects the Nonconformist minister, convinced of his vocation. He may not be admitted to the banquet, not even to a seat below the salt. And it is, alas, all too clear that men, forbidden to pray and worship together at what has been called the Lord's Own Service, cannot find it easy to march together in the name of the Lord against the devils of greed, injustice and inequality.

The Labour Party has made it evident that there is little hope of the united Left front, vital if the forces of privilege and frustration are to be defeated. It is equally evident that there is little chance of a united Christian front to leaven the common life with the precepts of the Sermon of the Mount.

The most ironic side of the situation is that the party in the Church most vehement in the sacerdotal claims is now the party that is least interested in social reform. The Christian Socialists who influenced me in my youth—Westcott, Scott, Holland, Gore, Headlam, Dolling, Lowder—were all High Churchmen. They went from the altar to fight against the wickedness of the slums. To-day for the most part Anglo-Catholicism has become other-worldly ritualism.

In a position of considerable influence, I tried for a number of years to persuade Anglo-Catholics that it was of more concern to Almighty God that the stomachs of the children of a parish should be well filled than that the parish priest's chasuble should have a hem of the orthodox width. I completely failed. My experience was that the denunciation of the slum landlord would arouse little interest and bring nothing but possibly an angry letter from Cheltenham, while a note on the proper place of the *Gloria* in the Holy Communion office would bring a spate of correspondence in the dull season when correspondence is most welcome to the harassed editor.

On the other hand, Malvern is having its effect. The social gospel is being preached in more and more churches, but generally by men outside the Laudian tradition, who are theologically closer to Geneva than to Rome. It must be recognised that this makes the Christian front a greater possibility.

To a man who holds my opinions the situation is as perplexing as it is disappointing. I cannot conceive how a man can hold the Catholic faith without being a Socialist, though I can quite understand how a man can be a Socialist without holding the Catholic faith. But of one thing I remain certain. That is, that the only thing that can make this world a fit place for the common people, to whom Christ belonged, to live in is a Christian revolution. The other fact that has to be accepted is that the majority of practising Christians of all allegiances will probably be among the people who will strenuously resent any sort of revolution that threatens to penalise the few to benefit the many. SIDNEY DARK

A LONDON DIARY

TOM DRIBERG, M.P., the liveliest of our columnists, is no longer William Hickey. Or, if you prefer, the William Hickey column, made famous by Driberg, will now be written by someone else. I cannot say that I am surprised that Driberg should part company with the *Daily Express*; his double position as progressive M.P. and journalist on a Conservative daily paper must long have been full of embarrassment. But the occasion of his sacking deserves comment. Certainly it had something to do with his statement that Sir Andrew Duncan, Minister of Supply, was being offered a £25,000-a-year post as Director-General of an alliance between the F.B.I. and the British Employers' Federation. Denials that such a post was being offered, or that Sir Andrew Duncan would accept it if it were, immediately followed. Driberg replied by welcoming Sir Andrew's denial, but adding the suggestion that his protest had perhaps saved Sir Andrew from embarrassment by forestalling the invitation. He tells the story in some detail in the *Essex Chronicle*, which circulates in his constituency. He has been violently attacked over the incident, particularly by the *Daily Sketch*, which suggests that his behaviour is "unEnglish." What crime is Driberg supposed to have committed? The real trouble, I take it, was not the inaccuracy of his information, but that he put his finger on a tendency which Big Business would prefer to keep quiet. It amalgamates into ever more powerful monopolies and lends to the State for the duration men who will later return as private servants of the monopoly. Clearly this dual position is dangerous. During this war we talk of the State taking over big business. What actually happens is that big business moves into Whitehall. I see no reason to think that this tendency will diminish. On the contrary. As things are now going, after the war we shall have a Corporate State in which the great Trade Unions will share power and a percentage of the profits with great industrial monopolies, and the monopolies will benefit by having at their head men who have run industry on a national scale under war conditions.

* * *

I am glad to see that people have begun to speak plainly about Walter Loeb, the ex-German who baits refugees and who is the principal organiser of "Fight for Freedom," in which body too many honest Labour people have guilelessly allowed themselves to be trapped. Some of them have, I think, found out their mistake by now. But the main attack on Loeb comes, amusingly enough, from the Extreme Right "Never Again" Association. The story behind the "Never Again" Association's meeting on Loeb is interesting. Loeb, I am told, applied to the Vice-Chairman of the "Never Again" Association, Mrs. Tennant, with the object of forming an alliance in which "Fight for Freedom" should be the "progressive" and "Never Again" the Conservative wing. Mrs. Tennant turned him down. Sir Samuel Turner, then Chairman, favoured him. A majority of the Committee took Mrs. Tennant's view and refused to have anything to do with an ex-German. The attitude of very Conservative M.Ps. like Professor Savory and Major Braithwaite who support "Never Again" I do not know, but I hear that Lady Vansittart sided with Sir Samuel Turner, and it is presumed that her husband shares her view. Sir Samuel resigned and the "Never Again," actually holds a meeting at which the public is asked to come and hear "about Walter Loeb, the stateless German!"

* * *

For months past the local Nazi leaders of the Baden University town of Freiburg were foremost in denouncing oppositional groups, inside and outside the University. On June 28th the local *Kreisleiter*, Fritsch, opened a "youth week" with an address in which he warned young people against two dangers. German youth, it appears, tends to adopt a slovenly and "unmilitary" attitude and to become presumptuous "know-alls" interested in using their intelligence. "To-day you can serve your Fatherland least with your intelligence, but most with your confidence and heart. Youth must never allow confidence in the Führer to be taken from them, but must look up to him and regard him as an example." Meanwhile, the Reich Minister of the Interior (for whom Himmler, the Gestapo and S.S. Chief, acts as Executive) has denounced the activities of the association *Neudeutschland* as hostile to the State. The leader of this New Germany movement is Rektor (Dean) Alfred Beer, the headmaster of a secondary school at Freiburg. The week-end hotel "Hammerloch," near the village of Breisgau, which was owned by him has been confiscated. The organisation, which apparently was spread over the whole district, seems to have used as its meeting place the Hotel "Hammerloch," which is situated some distance into the Black Forest. This organisation appears to have been in some way an opposition group in the University. Such bits of news about growing anti-Nazi sentiment are significant. Remember that we can hear nothing certain about such activities until the news is published, which means, as in this case that the leaders, particularly Alfred Beer, have been arrested and all the information which the Gestapo can wring out of them, has been obtained. Alfred Beer and his comrades are no doubt dead by now.

* * *

France, the valuable French daily published in London, recently had an interesting article that first appeared in *Le Franc-Tireur*, a clandestine newspaper that appears each month in France. In 1938 a paper appeared in Paris, called *Le Grand Occident*, which demanded that Pétain should be put into power. "The Jewish Freemason is the enemy" was the slogan of the paper, and the front page carried the sign of the "francisque" (the Vichy equivalent of the swastika). The advocate of this "Pétain au pouvoir" fascism was called Fremjean—and Fremjean was undeniably an employee of Ferdonnet (the French Haw-Haw) and Ferdonnet, of course, was the employee of Hitler. Pétain has already been accused of preparing himself for dictatorship in a defeated France when he was at the Madrid Embassy months before the defeat. This new evidence suggests that his collaboration with Germany began before the war.

* * *

Something could surely be done to assist people stranded without money in strange towns, now that so many working folk are compulsorily "mobile." One hears of cases in which factories have been quite unready to receive workers "drafted" to them by Employment Exchanges in distant towns, so that disgruntled workers have had to find their own way home again. And there are always people who forget their purses or pocket books, lose their return-tickets or mislay their husbands, and have no means of getting home. The usual thing is to ask a policeman, often to make the staggering discovery that if he lends you money for your fare he does so out of his own pocket. Where this is the case (it depends on local practice), the bobby is not unreasonably reluctant to lend; my information is that there are few policemen in such districts who have not lent money in the early days, but (incredible as it may sound) fewer still who have ever had the money repaid. Almost any policeman, it seems, regards such a "loan" as a dead loss if he feels unable to refuse it; if it is returned he can be pleasantly surprised. Some police forces make a practice of putting through a trunk telephone call to the police of the borrower's home town, asking that the necessary sum be collected from his relatives or friends; when a message is received that this has been done, the money is advanced.

* * *

In Britain, where all political parties behave as if they were Liberals, it is long since there has been an obvious place for a Liberal Party. Of course, if the Labour Party became Socialist and the Conservatives Fascists, then there might be a Liberal revival. Meanwhile, the more enterprising Liberals are always trying to get the Party to accept a Radical Economic Policy. The latest example of Progressive Liberalism is a remarkably able policy statement signed by four Liberal M.P's., Clement Davies, W. J. Gruffydd, T. L. Horabin and Everett Jones. Worth reading: it shows again that Liberals can be Socialists if they don't say so.

* * *

According to Rose Macaulay and others who have recently been in Lisbon, the Germans know exactly who is to fly by what aeroplane and when. Naturally they would; what is to prevent them? The suggestion follows that there must have been some special reason for the attack that killed Leslie Howard. A guess, commonly made at the time, was that the Germans thought that Churchill might be on the plane; but if they in fact know exactly who is travelling another explanation is necessary. A friend suggests that the reason may well have been personal spleen by Göring, who has no doubt seen Pimpernel Smith, Howard's most effective piece of anti-Nazi propaganda, which showed Smith (Howard) escaping Göring's threats in the last scene. From what we know of Göring, the idea may be more than fanciful.

CRITIC

THE MARCH FROM ROME

WHEN Musso receives marching orders
He will march out of Rome (to the station)
Escorted no doubt by marauders,
And entrain for a new destination.
When he steams, by express, from the city,
Leaving behind his portfolio,
Leaving the Fascist Committee,
Leaving the peace to Badoglio,
Will he lead picked Black Shirts in formation,
All doing the *passo romano?*
Will Gayda be there, for dictation?
Will a place be reserved for Ciano?
Leaving Palazzo Venezia,
Will the Duce rush north to Torino?
Will he step off at Genoa and Spezzia?
Will he take the salute in Trentino?
Will he visit the Führer's Headquarters?
Will he make a short stay at the Brenner?
Will he talk at Zagreb to reporters?
Will he winter at Nice? or Vienna?
Will he pack his Dictator's diploma
For use at his next destination,
Or when he has marched out of Roma
Will he steam into Waterloo Station?

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to W. N. Hollowell.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Sir Godfrey Ince, Director-General of Man Power, has taken the unusual step of explaining the policy of his department to his staff.—*Daily Telegraph.*

During the first few months of marriage I had a habit of smacking my husband's face. One day he retaliated with such terrific force that I am now thoroughly cured.—*Sunday Pictorial.*

What respect can the smoking and often gossiping young mothers of to-day hope to command from their children? It is nothing unusual to see little babies in close proximity to a lighted cigarette.—
—Letter to the *South Wales Echo.*

Our traditional love of self-depreciation must be preserved, for only so can we progress; but after a spate of Labour Party Conferences, where none of these things are understood, it is good to be reminded that, in a sentence, we are the only people on earth who really know how to "play the game."
—From an article, "Us and the Others," by Sir Ernest Benn in the *Evening News.*

THE TRIAL OF ARNAUD FRAITEUR

IT is seldom possible to catch more than an isolated glimpse of the European civil war. It is a war waged below the surface of publicity, a struggle in the dark, and the occupying power is careful to see that it remains in the dark. Only the most scanty information about the trials of patriots is allowed to appear in print, and often even the names of the accused are withheld. There is good reason for this. No conclusions, political or psychological, must be drawn; no bond, moral or sentimental, is allowed to form between those who fight the war in the dark and the larger community for which it is being fought. The recent trial, in Brussels, of the murderers of the Belgian quisling publicist Paul Colin is an exception. For once the background of the murdered man is thoroughly familiar, for once at least one of the accused is not a nameless youngster, but one whose identity has been established and about whom a good deal is known.

Colin, the founder and editor of the daily newspaper *Le Nouveau Journal* and its weekly satellite *Cassandre*, was shot on the afternoon of April 14th, 1943, as he was leaving his office, and died the same night in a Brussels hospital. On May 5th, 1943, three men appeared before the military tribunal of the German Oberfeldkommandantur, charged with the assassination and with complicity in a number of other political murders alleged to have been carried out by the same underground organisation to which they were said to belong. They were Arnaud Fraiteur, student, aged 19, André Bertulot, a baker's boy, aged 23, and a 37-year-old locksmith named Maurice Rasquin. The proceedings opened in public, but already after the first few minutes the court was ordered to be cleared. The remainder of the two days' trial continued behind closed doors until shortly before the verdict, when the public was once more admitted. All three accused were sentenced to death by hanging. Their appeal was rejected the next day by the German military commander for Belgium and Northern France, and it must be presumed that they were executed. But obviously the murdered man was too prominent to make it possible for the Nazis to suppress all publicity of the trial. *Le Nouveau Journal* was consequently permitted to publish an "impression" by its assistant editor Jules van Erck, and on the same day, May 7th, 1943, Brussels Radio broadcast a lengthy account of the proceedings, probably by the same author. These accounts, held against what is known of Paul Colin and Arnaud Fraiteur, his assassin, are unusually instructive.

Colin was no petty quisling. The most powerful and influential among Belgian collaborators, he was, in his own way, certainly an extraordinary man. His enemies admit his brilliance and versatility and acknowledge his mastery of the French language and the flawlessness of his style. For these very reasons, since moral scruples were unknown to him, he was an exceedingly dangerous man who had assassination coming to him. Already in the last war he had arranged to be spared military service, and on its conclusion stated publicly that he hoped to live long enough to see Germany take her revenge. An outstanding and acknowledged authority on French and Flemish painting, he published a large number of standard monographs; but the same mind which produced these excellent books contrived, simultaneously, to produce the weekly paper *Cassandre* which, taking *Gringoire* for its model and often surpassing it, lived exclusively on scandal.

There is little doubt that years before the present war Colin, who possessed no funds of his own, received large sums of money from Berlin. These he acknowledged by publishing a fulsome glorification of Germany's invasion of Norway. The invasion of his own country sent him packing to France where in an enlightened moment shortly before its collapse the Reynaud government interned him at Le Vernet camp; but the armistice set him free. He returned to Brussels, continuing his editorship of *Cassandre* to which he now added, financed by Berlin, the daily paper *Le Nouveau Journal*, which first appeared on October 1st, 1940. Both papers were, and still are, uncompromisingly collaborationist, practising the most unashamed, if brilliantly written, blackmail and denunciation of the enemy. As he was also President of the "Association of Belgian Journalists" Colin's sinister influence reached far beyond his own two papers.

While it was easy for the Nazis to glorify the murdered journalist-blackmailer as a great patriot who had died a soldier's death, the case of his assassin proved difficult. For members of the resistance movement the Nazi terminology provides three categories; they are invariably either Communists, or Jews, or simply depraved "down-and-outs" who will do anything for money. Since their identity is rarely divulged this nomenclature always fits. But Arnaud Fraiteur, was too well known in Brussels Society to make it possible to class him under any of these heads. He was no Jew. Nor was he a Communist; he is even alleged to have stated during the trial that before joining the underground group he assured himself that it was not a Communist organisation, or he would not have joined. Finally he was anything but a "depraved hireling." As the only son of a wealthy Brussels stockbroker he lived in more than comfortable surroundings, and was certainly not in need of money. What, then, was he, and how was his deed to be explained?

There are several people in this country, among them close friends of Arnaud Fraiteur, now serving in the Belgian Army who testify to his absolute integrity of character. They describe this 19-year-old student as highly intelligent, courageous, straightforward and unquestionably honest, and reject the possibility that he may have been tempted by romantic ideas into something the full significance of which he did not realise. They insist that he knew fully what he was doing and give no credence to the veiled hints of Jules van Erck, the reporter, that he made a full confession, exposing in every detail the organisation to which he belonged. The picture of a "spineless young bourgeois led astray" is certainly false. It is known that some six months before the assassination Fraiteur made several attempts to leave Belgium and to reach this country in order to join the army, and that he contacted his friends in London for this purpose. We don't know why he failed in this. He even told the court, according to the

Nazi version: "I complained many times that I could not become a soldier," and added: "I then convinced myself that this [working in the resistance movement] was a way of being one." The court greeted this frank statement with derisive laughter. But it obviously frightened van Erck, the reporter. Because here was the clue to the riddle, with all its implications.

Though utterly baffled, van Erck nevertheless gives an impressive description of young Fraiteur. "I was unable to avert my eyes from this young head," he confesses, "and the words it has spoken are forever engraved in my memory. Time and again, as I watched him, I interrogated with burning curiosity this face with its still not fully developed features of an adolescent, this tall and supple silhouette which seemed to come straight from some other Oxford adapted to Brussels ways." Strange words of hardly concealed admiration to come from a Nazi journalist watching the trial of the murderer of his chief. "If the demon of literature," he continues, "could manage to penetrate into this courtroom unobserved, we would be tempted to say that, looking at this young bourgeois with the chestnut hair, his blue eyes, his elegance inspired by the most classical English models, we have thought of Lafcadio, of the 'crime gratuit,' of the turnings and windings, difficult to grasp, of a psychology dominated by the romantic rather than the natural stirrings of the soul." In his desperate effort to press this young man into the prescribed Nazi classification, the reporter—respects are due to his literary education—is compelled to summon André Gide and the hero of the *Caves dv Vatican* to provide an explanation, and yet he fails and realises it.

For Arnaud Fraiteur, at once, makes it clear that he is not to be confused with "a young man seduced by adventure, the romanticism of secret conspiracies where one takes on 'noms de guerre' and plays with revolvers for the benefit of mysterious chiefs whose authority one has light-heartedly accepted"—as van Erck would like to believe. The military prosecutor rises and demands a sentence of death by hanging for all three accused. "There is not the slightest movement, not a trace of emotion on the young face of Arnaud Fraiteur. He is quite indifferent —indifferent through one does not know what incredible, serene light-heartedness." The interpreter announces that the verdict has to await confirmation from the military commander, and that meanwhile the defendants may appeal. "In writing?" asks Arnaud Fraiteur. "In writing. You may do so until the 8th of this month," is the reply. (The day is the 6th). "Until the 8th inclusive?" inquires Fraiteur. "Inclusive" comes the answer. "How to define the voice of this young Bruxellois as he speaks these words?" wonders van Erck. It is cool, clear, unmoved; it is "anxious to sound well-educated, polite, obliging, almost helpful." He does not understand. Or he pretends not to understand, for fear of having to admit that this youngster of 19 knew what he was doing, was conscious of his responsibility and ready to take the consequences.

The account broadcast from Brussels Radio the same evening confirms the extraordinary impression young Fraiteur must have made on those who watched him, by attempting to destroy this impression at all costs. "Since they [the accused] pretended they were serving a most noble cause, one would have expected them to hold their heads high to the bitter end, to appear as men ready to sacrifice their lives for their ideals, to scorn to ask for mercy or to excuse their crime. We would then have bowed before such an attitude, for it would have commanded respect." The inference is clearly readable between the lines: Fraiteur *did* hold his head high to the bitter end, he neither excused his crime nor asked for mercy, and *was* ready to sacrifice his life. We have it on Jules van Erck's own testimony. Was it then that, in actual fact, even the quislings "bowed before his attitude," because it did, in fact, command their respect"?

Peter de Mendelssohn

TWO IBSEN PLAYS

The performance of *The Master Builder* at the Westminster Theatre is the best of the four I have seen—not in every respect but as a whole; and it held its audience far better than the others. The two leading characters, Solness (Mr. Donald Wolfit), Hilda Wangel (Miss Rosalind Iden) were played with intensity; and intensity is the essential qualification for acting a play the significance of which lies within the souls of the characters, and behind, so to speak, a sequence of events at once prosaic and fantastic.

The story itself is really more grotesque than tragic: an elderly, successful architect is reluctantly persuaded by a romantic young girl to climb the scaffolding of a tower he has just completed and to hang a wreath on its weather-vane. This traditional ceremony, for he has a bad head for heights, he had been wont to leave to his foreman—except on one occasion ten years before. But she is so set upon the man she admires proving to himself, to her, and to others, that he is not afraid, and upon seeing him as she had seen him once as a schoolgirl, high up above the world, waving his hat triumphantly against the sky, that she insists upon his attempting to do it again. Her hero-worship is too precious to lose: he climbs, he turns giddy and falls. This fatal accident, due to elderly masculine vanity trying to show off before a young lady, hardly seems a deep theme for tragedy—for sardonic comedy, perhaps, and a little overstrained for that.

In all Ibsen's greater plays, the spell and beauty lie below their surface humdrum realism, and spring out of his solitary dreaming mind. There was always a connection between his themes, his characters, and the adventures of his own soul which he watched and stalked with cat-like caution. "Everything I have written," he wrote in a letter, "has the closest connection with what I have lived through, even if it has not been my own personal experience." If ever a man lived daringly in spite of the clockwork regularity and careful conventionality of his habits, it was Ibsen. Those who act his plays must feel, and convey, what his characters stood for in his own eyes. They were projections of his own searching intensity; and therefore with intensity they must be interpreted on the stage, if they are to tell as half-symbolic figures in the often queer arbitrary fables he thought out to exhibit and explain them. I record here my grateful admiration for Mr. Wolfit's and Miss Iden's acting (they played, by the way, admirably *together*), because it drove straight at what is most important and moving in the parts of Solness and Hilda. And I felt at the time the audience also was with me. It should never be the first aim of actors in an Ibsen drama to make his extraordinary characters seem as normal and immediately recognisable as possible—though this is what the actors, alas, usually do, but to interpret them with such force of passion that we believe in them in spite of their strangeness. They were born out of the inner life of a thinking poet.

"Solness," Ibsen once said, with his characteristic love of understatement "is a relative of mine"; and one way of suggesting all that the actor of that part has to bring out is to consider the character in relation to Ibsen himself. *The Master Builder* (1890) introduces the final phase of his glorious creative career. It was in part an outcome of the long experiences of an artist who had had to battle long and hard for success, and still carried the scars of that struggle about him. What miraculous luck he, the poor apothecary's assistant, with many enemies and no gift for making friends, had had! And luck might turn. Again, though he had accomplished far more than he could have expected, and won European fame, how bitterly and perpetually he had had to pay for his triumph in terms of his personal happiness; and worse, how often he had also sacrificed the happiness of those near him (his wife, for example) to his work—his mission. I guess, that every elderly original thinking writer, to whom experience itself has been mainly a means towards understanding and reflecting life, and not valued for its own sake feels sometimes that after all the price inplied in his necessary aloofness has been too heavy. Are, after all, his works as wonderful as all that? Wouldn't the world have got on as well without them? And for that matter who ever really listened? And his Fame? Well, by the time a man has won the respect of the world it is ten to one his fellow men have lost his. The young can't believe that, but the old know it. Nevertheless, whoever has won fame hates to be superseded and possibly by smaller men. It is bitter indeed to the leader to awake to find himself that pathetic figure, the old pioneer. All this turmoil of emotion and reflection went to the making of Solness. Solness, with his dread of the young generation; Solness, with his conviction that building churches had been useless (Ibsen was thinking of his own early poetic plays, *Brand*, etc.), likewise those bourgeois houses with good plumbing (his social problem plays); Solness, with his yearning to build homes with lofty towers (those realistic dream dramas of his last period which this play ushered in); Solness, with his torturing, half-morbid misgivings that he had unintentionally but persistently sacrificed others to his success—bled his wife's happiness white. And something queerer, dimmer, too, had gone to creating him; Ibsen's vague remorse that though he had dared all things as a thinker alone at his writing table, he had never stood up as a man for the right, or taken a risk for a cause. Instead, had he not grown richer and richer, more and more respectable, safer and safer, encased in his black frock-coat on which the row of orders grew ever longer and longer: he had "*never dared to climb as high as he could build.*" How did youth which will demand even the impossible from its heroes, regard him? What did he think of himself? Hilda was the answer to that; Hilda who appealed to something very deep in himself by demanding "the impossible," and mocked at his "sick conscience," telling him that the "troll" in him, his genius, had a right to ride roughshod over others.

Now, I am not going to pay Mr. Wolfit the colossal compliment of saying that I divined all this from his Solness. Of course, I knew it was there in the part before the curtain went up. But I can pay him a very considerable tribute: I perceived traces of all these elements in his interpretation of the character and I noticed nothing in it inconsistent with them. Miss Iden, though her acting lacked modulation here and there and, superficially, sometimes grace, came extraordinarily close to portraying in Hilda that blend which the dramatist intended of crude, ruthless, adoring, matter-of-fact girlhood, and of the Mountain Nymph (or Demon) of Liberty; a blend which, when embodied in flesh and blood, may easily prove fatal to old experienced artists, appealing as it does to the damaged idealist in them, and awaking once more a blind trust in life. I was struck by the pace at which the play was taken. This, on the whole, was to the good, and to those already familiar with the play the unpausing rapidity of dialogue only added to the excitement of it. But the dialogue is often deep with suggestion and I often feared important clues must have been missed by the audience. Certainly, the talk between Hilda and Mrs. Solness should have been taken slower, when the girl curls up at the elder woman's feet to sun herself in friendly sympathy, and rises chilled to the bone. The top lighting is crude; sometimes turning nostrils and sockets into skull-holes and the red demonaic glow from the stove in which Solness basks when speaking of "his troll" is abominable. But for the acting—bravo!

I have congratulations, too, for Miss Lehmann's Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*, at the Duke of York's, though she is made up to look like a middle-aged mother of to-day, not a matron of the 'sixties, and her interpretation shows little trace of a maternal temperament. Mrs. Alving besides being a woman who had saved (not only her late husband's reputation) but her own soul from "ghosts"—the shadows of dead ideas, and of a moribund authority, was, as a woman, first and foremost a mother. Miss Lehmann plays the rebel against hypocrisy who had won her freedom of mind at a great price, with great intelligence and true intensity; but the instinctive mother in her role escaped her. I should like to see her in the part of another Ibsen woman who was also a victim of the denial of "the joy of life," the maiden-sister in *John Gabriel Borkman*. The difficulty in reviving *Ghosts* is that Pastor Manders, the opponent in it of honesty of thought, the spiritual coward, is to-day no longer a formidable, but merely a comic, figure. It is impossible to believe without an effort either in his surviving authority, or that once Mrs. Alving had loved him and he, her. The lines which once shocked so much that the play was forbidden for years by our hypocritical Censorship, which under the plea of suppressing indecency has always smothered thought, now fall like commonplaces on the ear. Some of my colleagues in the Press, however, have been exceedingly dense about this fine play. Their comments have shown them incapable of appreciating its masterly construction, emotional dignity and tragic originality. Go then: see for yourselves if you cannot respond to these things. It is worth while. Its medical science may be out of date, and religion no longer speaks, thank Heaven, with the voice of Pastor Manders; but still terribly true remains the power of the Past over the Present, and still terribly tragic the spectacle of the often vain struggle of human beings against it.

Desmond MacCarthy

THE OUT-OF-DATE WRITER

At dinner in the refreshment room of the trust "Fine Silicate," several journalists were sitting round a table having their dinner.

The talkative economist, Rasvozhayev, asked Personov, another economist:

"Fedya, what's the news in the papers?"

Fedya Personov mumbled lazily:

"Here you are—They say it's thirty-five years since Chekhov died."

"Oh, that! I've read that," answered Rasvozhayev. "To tell you the truth, I think Chehov's out of date."

"Oh, is he?" asked one of the waiters.

"It's a fact. Where are all those intellectuals Chekhov wrote about—the ladies, the merchants, the officials? Take for example that story—what's its name? . . . Yes! 'The Great and the Small.'"

"What's all this 'Great and Small' about?" asked Pilsky, an engineer, coming towards the table.

Rasvozhayev explained to the engineer . . .

"You see, Vasily, I say that Chehov is now out of date. Take that story 'The Great and the Small.' You remember it. There are two ex-schoolmates, one of them a small official and the other a general. Naturally under such circumstances there can be no normal human relationship between them. One has to cringe, and the other accepts it."

"Well?"

"Well—which one of us workers in the 'Fine Silicate' is capable of such slavishness? I? No! Fedya Personov? No again! You, Vasily?"

The engineer smiled and said:

"I must be left out of your list as I am not working any longer in the 'Fine Silicate.'"

"How's that?"

"Because I've been transferred."

"Where to? To what kind of job?"

"To the Silicate Trust in the Kalinin district. And what do you think? I am to be head of the trust," he added.

The effect produced by this news was certainly astonishing. Rasvozhayev stood up again. He gave a wry smile and then said in a husky voice:

"There is just one thing left, and that is to congratulate you, Vasily Nikolayevitch—I mean to say—your great—well—distinction."

"Are you mocking me?" asked the engineer, gaily.

Razvozhayev blushed in confusion.

"Oh, no! Of course not, Comrade Pilsky. How *could* I mock you on such an occasion? I always *knew* that you would have a brilliant career. You have exceptional abilities and a talent for leadership . . ."

"Cut it out, please," said the engineer.

The rest of the company, shrugging their shoulders and laughing, moved away from the table. Rasvozhayev stood up straight and continued in an eager whisper, unable to check himself . . .

"And also I have a humble request to make, Comrade Pilsky. Supposing that you should require our help in planning, I am always willing to work under your direction. I have known all along what an exceptional director you would make on Silicates . . ."

The engineer shrugged his shoulders, and with a sweep of the hand walked away from the table.

V. Ardov

(Translated by Musia Renbourn from "Crocodile Album," published in Russia and to be published shortly in England by the Pilot Press.)

BALLADE DES BONS GOURMETS

I met a man who came from Londonderry
And took him to the Berkeley for a drink.
The waiter brought a bottle labelled sherry
And filled the glasses right up to the brink.
We held them to the light and made them clink,
Then savoured the bouquet, and called for more
Before we sipped, then said—what do you think?
"It tastes as if it had been drunk before."

We had a cocktail with an impaled cherry
And looked upon the gin when it was pink,
Then went to dinner anxious to be merry.
With oysters we had Guinness, black as ink.
Hock with brook-trout would make an abbess wink;
We had it, and it made our spirits soar.
With partridge, burgundy—Where is the sink?
It tastes as if it had been drunk before.

A medium-sweet sauterne with a blueberry
Tart was the right thing, then Wynand Fockink
Kummel with coffee was uplifting, very.
Each said the other was a dandy gink.
We went out to a pub with polished zinc
Counter, and ordered brandy with a roar,
Then wept and mumbled with a gulp and blink,
"It tastes as if it had been drunk before."

ENVOI

PRINCE, do you hear that little thing in mink
Complaining of green mice upon the floor?
I kissed it last night at the skating-rink.
It tastes as if it had been drunk before.

George Brown

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Russian War Pictures at 22 Lower Regent St.

No original paintings or drawings, but photographs of them, and some charming lithographs. The works reproduced are various in style—which is cause for congratulation; and though none is so audacious as our Sutherlands and Moores, some of them show the influence of Paris and possess an elegance that pleases the Western European eye. If the sculpture is feeble, it must be remembered that the Russians have never been sculptors, for the ikon took the place of statuary. The exhibition, includes photographs of actors and musicians performing to the troops, and the civilian clothes of one young pianist suggest that in Russia music is considered, even in wartime, an activity of the first importance. The posters are vivid and often brutal; but the rest of the exhibition is more interesting because it reveals the individuality and variety of Russian visual art.

THE MOVIES

"Five Graves to Cairo," at the Plaza

"The Moon is Down," at the Tivoli

"The More the Merrier," at the Gaumont

It is the privilege of fiction not merely to entertain but to explore—to guess, to sweep ahead, to bring within range territories off the map. Imagine that *Five Graves to Cairo* had been produced a year or 18 months ago, to give us a foretaste of Libya. We should have been delighted, then, with a thriller in which desert offensives and the coast road, tank interiors, bombers, bagpipes, Field-Marshal Rommel himself were made vivid. Then, but not now. The reporters got in first, with *Wavell's* 50,000 and *Desert Victory*; and the fiction that emerged from that—the only sort of fiction possible—was *[illegible] Men*. *Five Graves to Cairo* is a throw-back, and to enjoy it one must forget all the realities that have intervened. Rommel, for example, is our old friend Von Stroheim, looking and behaving not at all like Rommel. He has "made a study of the history and habits of the German field-marshal," it seems; one fact will certainly be new to the rest of us historians, and that is that Rommel was a famous archæologist before the war, who dug in Egypt, and while digging buried supplies of oil, water and ammunition to make a victorious campaign possible. The rest of the film, with Franchot Tone as a lame waiter at headquarters who discovers the Rommel plan and so leads the way for Montgomery, is on the same level. Does it thrill? Not so far as I'm concerned, and I am distressed to see that the film is directed by Billy Wilder, who showed such delicacy of touch in *The Major and the Minor*.

The occupation, unlike Libya, is a theme on which the untethered imagination may still spend itself. I suspect that the reason for disagreement over such films as *This Land is Mine* lies in our personal preconceptions and fears. What we ourselves imagined, at a time when invasion seemed certain, will determine our sympathy or antipathy towards these admittedly fictional reconstructions on the screen. Either we imagined and dreaded at the time; or we were relatively immune. If the first, we shall find ourselves far more open emotionally to the theme of Renoir's film and now of *The Moon is Down*. Steinbeck's book-play-film is most effective, I think, in its celluloid form; though the *en-tout-cas* method of authorship introduces, of course, a good deal of makeshift emotion and situation. It has the faults of all such films—moments of heroic speechifying and of melodrama when the hysteria of the author mingles with that of his characters—but, despite these, it is a tense and moving film. No need to recapitulate the episodes which everyone by now must know. Henry Travers gives a good performance as the Mayor, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke's Nazi colonel impresses by his restraint. Perhaps he shouldn't; but compare Sir Cedric with Mr. Stepanek at the Whitehall, and there can be no question that he's twice as effective. Good acting all through this film.

The More the Merrier is a gay little comedy, with a hint of Preston Sturges, about living-space in Washington, bachelor lives, working to schedule, tripping over other people's feet, getting engaged to the wrong man, and in the end marrying the right one. About three-quarters of the way through it gets rather lost in tears and tangles, but Jean Arthur and Charles Coburn give delightful performances as a pair of incongruous flat-sharers, and Joel McCrea arriving late on the scene—but not too late to satisfy a hungry girl—reinforces the hint of Preston Sturges. Director, George Stevens.

William Whitebait

Correspondence

CONFERENCE AFTERMATH

Sir,—May I suggest to Mr. Cove and his associates that if they want to get people to listen to them they will require to put their propaganda on a much higher level than anything they have attempted up to now?

It is not sufficient merely to indulge in a campaign of abuse and misrepresentation of their opponents.

I am not myself a member of the "Fight for Freedom" Group, but the members of this group are well known as people of the highest integrity who have devoted their lives to building up the Labour Party. It is no exaggeration to say that they have rendered a thousand times greater service to the Labour Movement than all the unstable people who line up with Mr. Cove. If the Party has to choose between the two groups, Mr. Cove and his friends will get the biggest shock of their lives.

My object in writing is, however, to deal with another aspect of Mr. Cove's charges. He says "even paid officials at Transport House could defy Party Policy with impunity." This kind of thing is mean and contemptible. If Mr Cove has any charge to bring against any individuals let him name the persons and put into precise language the charge he makes against them so that the matter can be investigated. Let us have a little straightforward dealing in these matters and less innuendoes and insinuations.

Geo. Dallas

CONFERENCE AFTERMATH

Sir,—It would appear to us that why Mr. Cove and Mr. Walker quarrel over terms of anti-Vansittartism and Vansittartism is because they are both thinking in the negative term which Vansittart uses himself—"I have no policy for Germany."

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The crux of this matter is not in the degree of guilt in decimal points of the German people, but what policy acceptable to the Labour Movement at the cessation of hostilities will lead to the creation of a democratic government for the German people.

We are concerned with the formation of a policy which would destroy the power of the junkers, industrialists and militarists to recreate the German war machine. We wish to tear out the roots of that power from the heavy industries—chemical and electrical—and to remove the Nazi influence from municipal administration. The channels for the re-education of the German youth lie with that international service which must be acceptable and available to all countries.

My Divisional Party put these first practical steps in a resolution to the Labour Party Conference and sincerely believes that if those who argue about the degree of guilt of the German people will consider the points of this resolution they will find that they have much in common when they come down to formulating a practical policy of what is to be done. If they do not, the solution to this problem will be provided by those who will be more concerned with the recreation of international cartels than with the creation of a democratic Germany. MILDRED BAMFORD

Chairman, South Hammersmith Labour Party.

LOW AMONGST THE BLIMPS

SIR,—I should like to support "Critic's" plea for not rebuilding London. There have been aesthetic serious losses but there have been gains, too. But how are we to preserve the gains and at least postpone reconstruction according to the plans of a combination of the best minds of the F.B.I. and the R.I.B.A.? Not by merely aesthetic arguments. I suggest that we should rally round the archaeologists. They want to delay the rebuilding of London until its prehistoric British, Roman, Saxon strata have been thoroughly examined. This will take time and the plea of the archaeologist is powerful in this country of reconditioned ruins. By the time they have finished, we may have got used to the open spaces and business reconciled to its exile in Oxford and other satellite towns.

But if London has not hitherto had enough ruins, Rome is only too well supplied. I was, therefore, startled to see a drawing by Low which seemed to rejoice in the spectacle of a Nordic type of young man emerging from a pile of ruins in the once Eternal City. The dilemma, Rome *v.* Liberty, is a somewhat artificial one. To save liberty we would no doubt sacrifice Melbourne as well as Rome, Rushcutter's Bay as well as the Colosseum. But the cheeriness with which Low faces the prospect was rather excessive. I recalled some drawings reproduced in the *Manchester Guardian* of, I think, 1918, in which a then unknown antipodean caricaturist satirised the zeal of William Morris Hughes for total war and no damned nonsense about culture, etc. Low might look them up. There is more than one way of being a Blimp.

D. W. BROGAN

YOUTH CENTRE

SIR,—An International Youth Centre was opened at 30 Pont Street, S.W.1, on July 1st. It will be managed by the International Youth Council in Britain to which the various youth groups of the Allies and some British youth organisations are affiliated.

Its object is primarily to provide young people of all nations with the means to study the problems of countries other than their own, and with congenial opportunities for mutual acquaintance and friendship.

It is planned to create there an international library of books and of gramophone records, and to arrange lectures, concerts, study groups, etc. A restaurant, lounge and reading-room will be available.

The Centre has many urgent needs, some of which can be met by donations which will be gladly received; but gifts in kind will be of great and immediate value, including a refrigerator, radio-gramophone, musical instruments, furniture (especially easy chairs), reading lamps, educational books and gramophone records.

Never before have so many potential young friends of this country been gathered here. The attempt to win their understanding and friendship and to encourage our own young men and women to learn more of the complex international issues, which demand so much of them, deserves every support.

Visitors will be welcome at the Centre. Meanwhile, I shall be very glad to receive gifts in money or kind from all those who wish this generation well. Such gifts should be addressed to me at 30 Pont Street, S.W.1. VIOLET BONHAM CARTER,

Patron of the International Youth Council

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

SIR,—Critic's note to my letter disappointed me, made me uneasy. "Inspectors to see that children are not cruelly treated. . . ." Any Blimp inspector might assert that my lot were being cruelly treated by being allowed to play all day if they want to. "And that they do learn . . . the simple techniques without which no one can be an efficient citizen." Learn what? Presumably the 3 R's; but learn when? An ex-pupil of mine refused to learn to read even at 16; he is at present so skilful an instrument maker that his firm demanded his return from the forces, and got him back. My Blimp inspector would have spotted that lad at 7, and have asked: "Why can't that boy read?" I fear that "Critic" is only expressing the views of those who think of education in terms of school subjects, and not in terms of happiness and character and sincerity and true citizenship. The pioneer school seeks to advance what is too often neglected in education—the release of emotion: it holds that the unconscious should have free play. I haven't seen the inspector who can measure that type of education with any known yardstick.

I have had one disturbing criticism from a friend. . . "Your letter in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION can be taken as backing up all the opponents of the Beveridge Report, all the *status quo* merchants." God forbid! I realise that I have only 75 pupils, and that Socialism will be able to better the education of millions. I am not arguing for the continuation of a system in which my 75 are well-fed and well-clothed and happy, while millions of children are under discipline in barrack buildings, often underfed and badly clothed. Private and Public schools will have to disappear as class affairs. And I am not worried about my own future, for I could cheerfully go a-farming in my old age. The point is put in a letter from a well-known schoolmaster. . . "A Socialist government might let you carry on as a personal favour to you. It is the unborn Neill who will be nipped in the bud." I only want to know if any of our planners of education in a Socialist Britain can give us a hint of what they think will happen to pioneer schools. It is too optimistic to phantasy that in a Socialist world every school will be a pioneer school, which of course it should. My fear of those who think in terms of moulding character and school lessons and textbooks and desks is a pretty terrific one, and when such have all the power of bureaucracy behind them, I tremble for the future of children.

A. S. NEILL

MILK DISTRIBUTION

SIR,—It was stated at the Annual General Meeting of the Milk Marketing Board that the Ministry's price structure is a more costly method of distribution than pre-war. This is not the case.

The distributor's remuneration is now based on services performed. In the past, dairymen who purchased milk from producers and disposed of it to consumers without any treatment or bottling whatsoever received exactly the same margin as dairymen who, for geographical reasons, had to pre-cool before dispatch and subsequently to pasteurise and bottle in compliance with Local Health requirements. The underlying reasons for the Ministry's policy was to smooth out such anomalies. The Board very properly desire that milk should reach consumers in as direct a manner as possible, but it is wrong and misleading to suggest that the Ministry's policy has "placed the burden of more middlemen on the industry."

The new price structure does not mean that dairymen, instead of drawing supplies direct from farmers,

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MACMILLAN

JULY 12

E. S. Conway

POST-WAR EMPLOYMENT

The publication of Sir William Beveridge's Plan for Social Security marks an epoch in the history of our fight against Want, one of the five giants, to which he has directed attention, blocking the road to reconstruction. Another of the giants is Idleness, and this one may prove the most formidable of the five, not because men are unwilling to work but because private enterprise has failed in the past to guarantee full employment for all. Mr. Conway puts forward a comprehensive scheme for attacking idleness. [8s 6d net]

JONATHAN CAPE

are transferring over to wholesalers. This can only be done with Ministry approval and such approval is only granted when transport and man-power economies are achieved.

Apart from the financial side, the Milk Board's policy of supplying milk direct from the farms to retailers—which apparently is not carried out in the case of the Board's own retailing activities in Norwich—is physically impossible in the larger towns. It would mean the abandonment of bulk transport of milk in rail tanks and the return to transportation in churns. To do this in London alone would mean the provision of labour and materials for something like 300,000 churns which do not exist to-day. It would necessitate the railways providing upwards of six hundred additional bogie vans daily. One six-wheeled rail tank contains the same quantity of milk as three 50ft. bogie milk vans carrying churns. Rail tanks are conveniently attached to express trains and to do away with bulk transport to central reception depots would give the railways the task of providing between thirty and forty additional milk trains daily to London alone, with consequential siding accommodation and man-power to handle the churns.

Dairymen do not agree that the new price structure has increased the cost of milk distribution to the nation: in fact, the margins under the new structure were so arranged that the total remuneration to the distributive side of the industry is not more than that obtaining under the previous system.

My Committee, representing as they do the large and small firms, Co-operative Societies and private traders, desire to put on record their view that the new basis of distributive margins is fairer and more equitable than that existing under the contract system of the Milk Marketing Board. STANLEY CLIFFORD,
Chairman, Central Milk Distributive Committee

G.B.S.

SIR,—As a labourer I have, for some seventeen years now, looked on Mr. Shaw in much the same way as Dr. Joad has done. The world of poverty is a stagnant, searing cage—Shaw's works did not melt the bars for me, but they flooded it with a divine light. From my experience Shaw is literally unknown to workers in general—and so with what enormous relish I have splashed his glory, humanity and reasonableness about!

He has made the evil things of life more tragic and petty and the great things more memorable.

A. C. BRAZIER

SIR,—Shaw tells us that "government by adult suffrage has made democracy impossible," because of "the political ignorance of Everywoman . . . added to the political ignorance and folly of Everyman." Yet these fools and ignoramuses through their representatives in the House of Commons got rid of Neville Chamberlain and put Churchill in his place, despite what Shaw calls "the Party machine impregnably fortified," and are even now winning the war.

He states there is "still much to do everywhere except in the House of Commons." If he reads the papers he must have noticed that only last week that despised body forced the Government to withdraw its proposals about service pensions appeals.

Shaw, to whom Tennyson's truncated line, "author, essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester" fitly applies, is often illogical and inaccurate. He thought Cromwell said "Stone dead hath no fellow." He imagined Robespierre was an atheist. In his Stuart play (among other howlers) he makes James, Duke of York, in the 1670's speak of visiting Geneva (!) sixteen years after Calvin's death! Calvin died in 1564. "Our rulers," he says, "must be chosen from the best panels of qualified people," for "only qualified people can find the remedies." Every Nazi leader would agree. But he is silent about how the qualified are to be chosen. I suppose by a process of National Selection, such as gave us Shaw and Joad among the qualified—the Herrenvolk. But would they have managed as well as Churchill?

One cannot help remembering that at one time Shaw admired Hitler (with slight qualifications) and had good words for Sir Oswald Mosley—whom he no doubt considered among the qualified—while the plain man and woman whom he despises never had any doubt about either. DAVID FREEMAN

THE NEGLECTED VILLAGE

SIR,—I am glad to see that Kathleen Little, in her letter in your issue of June 12th, endorses some of the conclusions reached in *Our Towns*. Although this book is mainly concerned with urban life "below standard" we realised the danger of "romanticising the countryside" as free from poverty, ill-health, overcrowding or bad school buildings.

In connection with the complaints made about the evacuated children of "the submerged tenth" we wrote: "In justice to the townspeople, it ought to be said that the complaints were by no means all on one side, and that in some instances the shortcomings of the billets and billetees themselves produced the faults of conduct . . . which were the source of complaint."

Two of our major recommendations relate to rural as well as urban areas. The first is that a national survey designed to focus attention on "all places, large and small, where there exist conditions of life at its worst" should precede the formulation of any policy of post-war reconstruction. The second is that the Board of Education should conduct a survey of *all* schools, and should "assume a stricter control of the condition of school premises . . . with compulsory powers to enforce, and if necessary pay for, a good minimum standard of school hygiene, including . . . a school canteen with properly balanced meals." We reminded readers that, of the schools black-listed as unfit in 1925, 741 were still in use in 1939 and suggested "that the educational system is ripe for a thorough overhaul by a strong committee of men and women to consider the content of education, the recruitment and training of teachers and the welfare of children in schools."

When the representative of the National Federation of Women's Institutes on the Women's Group on Public Welfare drew attention to some of the unsatisfactory conditions revealed by evacuation, the matter was considered to be of such importance that the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group was appointed to inquire into it. *Our Towns* is the result of that inquiry. AMY SAYLE,
Chairman, Hygiene Committee
Women's Group on Public Welfare,
26, Bedford Square, W.C.1.

BLACK REDSTART

SIR,—The history of the Black Redstart in London is more complex than Dorothy Galton's letter suggests. Its regular visits began with a bird that frequented the Horseferry Road area of Westminster in 1936. Breeding was first proved in 1940, when a pair reared two broods near Westminster Abbey. Last year at least three pairs bred, and a score of singing males were heard in various parts of London. This year they are present again in good numbers, and at least one pair is known to have nested. There is every reason to hope that the Black Redstart will become a permanent addition to London's scanty avifauna. In choice of habitat only the House Sparrow and the semi-wild London Pigeon are more urban.

R. S. R. FITTER
Recorder, Ornithological Section,
London Natural History Society

PARKS OF PEACE

SIR,—I was much impressed by Tom Harrisson's remarks regarding War Memorials.

Could not every town and village acquire its local beauty spot and place it in the custody of the National Trust? All amounts over-subscribed should be vested in a central fund under the control of the National Trust, and may I suggest, in view of your correspondent's remarks last week, that a start is made in Central Lakeland to acquire all remaining mountains and fellsides not yet held by the Trust, as a nucleus for Britain's first National Park?

Torquay. JOYCE K. GARNSWORTHY

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SECKER & WARBURG

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Nobody has done so much as Constance Garnett to diffuse among us an understanding and love of Russia, a public service that one would like to see recognised by some high honour. And it is lamentable that now, when we so urgently need and wish for more familiar acquaintance with our great ally, her translations should almost all be out of print. Reasons of policy, if I may venture the suggestion, seem to call for a special issue of paper to make available her Tolstoy, her Turgenev, her Dostoevski and her Chehov. Current events have impressed upon all of us the fortitude and resourcefulness of the Russian people; Soviet propaganda, moreover, has concentrated, understandably but I think too exclusively, upon their healthiness and general efficiency, so that we tend to think of Russians chiefly as interchangeable parts of a vast and superbly powerful machine. Such a picture may excite our respect, but if we are to feel sympathy and affection for the Russians we must be made aware of them as individuals, various and unpredictable, human beings like ourselves in their weaknesses, however superior in certain virtues. Zoshchenko, I think, has been far more successful in endearing his compatriots to us than any other contemporary writer, just because we recognise ourselves in his characters, as we can never do in those uniformly stalwart and eupeptic specimens, looming against a tiresomely photogenic sky, who seem as indefatigable as the tractors to which they minister. If you place efficiency in production above all other qualities, and wish therefore that man should increasingly approximate to the automaton, then you had better pin your hopes upon Germany. But if you value generosity of heart, sympathy and the warmth of humour, turn rather to the Russians. To admire these chiefly for such virtues as they share with the Nazis shows a gross misapprehension, and I recommend as an antidote the great nineteenth-century literature of which the modern Russians are so justly proud.

Lately I have been making a series of excursions into the world of Turgenev, moving with its inhabitants from the Orel country to Paris and to Baden and back to the steppes. I expect that the admirably acted *Month in the Country* has tempted many others to the same delightful experience. I have always found this Turgenev world peculiarly fascinating: there is much misfortune in it, there is weakness of character and disappointed love; yet it is a world in which one is happy, so tender is the author, so rich his understanding of human character, so extraordinary his response to natural beauty. A hundred scents rise from his pages—lilac, harness, acacia, lime, burning wood, geranium, mushrooms, mignonette, new bread and wild strawberries; a hundred sounds—larks and nightingales, the murmur of bees, the drumming of snipe, the strokes on the night watchman's board, a distant piano or guitar, water dripping from oars, a wild duck hitting a river, a beetle falling with a thud upon a path. Not Turgenev only, one may note, but Gogol, Aksakov, Goncharov, Tolstoy and Chehov interpret nature in their prose as beautifully as the great English poets, and this beauty is the more remarkable because it makes its immense effect even in translation. Let me quote from Turgenev:

> A marvellously sweet occupation it is to lie on one's back in a wood and gaze upwards! You may fancy you are looking into a bottomless sea; that it stretches wide below you; that the trees are not rising out of the earth, but, like the roots of gigantic weeds, are dropping—falling straight down into those glassy, limpid depths; the leaves on the trees are at one moment transparent as emeralds, the next they condense into golden, almost black green. Somewhere, afar off, at the end of a slender twig, a single leaf hangs motionless against the blue patch of transparent sky, and beside it another trembles with the motion of a fish on a line, as though moving of its own will, not shaken by the wind. Round white clouds float calmly across, and calmly pass away like submarine islands; and suddenly all this ocean, this shining ether, these branches and leaves steeped in sunlight—all is rippling, quivering in fleeting brilliance, and a fresh trembling whisper awakens like the thin, incessant plash of suddenly stirred eddies. One does not move—one looks, and no word can tell what peace, what joy, what sweetness reigns in the heart. One looks: the deep, pure blue stirs on one's lips, a smile innocent as itself; like the clouds over the sky, and, as it were, with them, happy memories pass in slow procession over the soul, and still one fancies one's gaze goes deeper and deeper, and draws one with it up into that peaceful, shining immensity, and that one cannot be brought back from that height, that depth. . . .

I do not know how faithful this passage is to the original, but it proves how finely Mrs. Garnett can handle English. Turgenev, one notices, was even more than Constable obsessed with clouds. Their movements and protean shapes, their colours, rosy and violet and orange in the sunset, silver under the moon, provide a perpetual accompaniment, an image portending the unimportance of man, the fugacity of individual life, the varied majesty of nature.

Then, immersed in this richness of scents and sounds and sights, the characters come forward, men in nankeen coats, pleasantly tired with riding or shooting, women with parasols, wearing large straw hats and frocks of muslin or more usually of barége (a silk or woollen fabric—the dictionaries differ—first made in the French Pyrenees). There are picnics at the side of a lake, with a lady in an armchair fishing for carp. With nightfall come snatches of conversation, and gentle melancholy silences under a Corinthian portico. Or else we are with the fashionable groups listening to the music at Baden outside the gaming rooms, or we watch the ferryman on the Rhine sleeping over his oars, while the trembling stars are reflected in the cold current of the river. Love enraptures the heart—only to leave it in devastation, because either the beloved is unworthy or the lover too irresolute. But time passes, bitterness evaporates into resignation. "The faint fragrance of a magnificent plant outlives all man's joys and sorrows—outlives man himself." A new generation is heard dancing and laughing, where once there were tears.

In *A Sportsman's Sketches*, Turgenev's first book in prose and, I think, his most beautiful, he is concerned more with the serfs than with their proprietors. His devotion to sport gave him an understanding of nature more intimate than any attainable by a sublime contemplator such as Wordsworth. Sharing the appetites of the fox and the falcon, he developed their fineness of ear and eye and nose. Moreover, he thus won an intimacy with the simple country folk that enables him to describe them far more from within than could the most benevolent reformer who lacked their passionate interest in shooting and fishing. One consequence was that this lovely group of sketches proved to be one of the most politically effective works ever written. It played a signal part in the emancipation of the serfs. The ruling class, and notably the Tsar, reading it with unsuspicious enjoyment, awoke to the fact that the serfs, whose conditions they had taken for granted, were individuals with feelings like their own. The book is indeed a model of propaganda, because never for an instant is one aware of being preached at. Turgenev displays the qualities and sufferings of the serfs, but leaves all comment to the reader. Here, for instance, is a serf talking: "The master was all a master should be, and he had a kind heart. He would give you a blow at times, and before you could look round he had forgotten it already." How delicately we are left to consider for ourselves this revealing remark—serfs attributing a kind heart to their master because he so quickly forgets his own brutality!

The book leaves in the memory not only the tyranny of a Sofron and the polite ferocity of a Pyenotchkin, the unhappiness of an Arina, a Vlass and a Lukerya, but the excitement of boys talking round a camp fire about ghosts, and the sensitive, young, passionate singing of a factory hand in a remote tavern. Again, where a common propagandist would make the landowners automatically heartless and fortunate, Turgenev shows them as they were—some good, some bad, most of them with qualities both good and bad. A proprietor could couple his serfs or keep them celibate as he pleased; he could part them from their families at a moment's notice and settle them on some remote estate. Turgenev had seen such cruelties in his own home, for, his mother was a woman whom unhappiness had made capricious and tyrannical alike to her family and to her serfs. But human beings do not necessarily abuse, or even use, their power. We have all known people submissive to the grumblings and whims of their servants; and similarly in the bad old days of Russia house-serfs sometimes bullied their proprietors. If Turgenev's picture had been more one-sided, it would not have made so profound an effect. His serfs are as various as their masters, sometimes happy, sometimes odious, often brimming with humour. He never heightens or isolates the miseries of serfdom; they emerge among a variety of other and elegiac impressions. It is this which makes the underlying indictment so persuasive.

Turgenev wrote *A Sportsman's Sketches* not at his home in the countryside that he describes, but in Paris, where nostalgia seems to have fired his imagination by focussing the impressions in his memory. The book, which took four years to write, was begun in 1847, when Turgenev was twenty-eight. His mastery of technique was already complete. But it is a characteristic of his method that the careless reader is never aware of the consummate art which each story is composed. None of the sudden twists and snap-endings beloved of most short story writers —instead, the incident develops from the setting and vanishes back into it, as naturally, it seems, as the petals of a flower open above the grass and then drop gently out of sight. "The movement of the falling maple-leaf," Turgenev notes, "is exactly like a butterfly's flight." Often his narrative appears to flutter in just this capricious fashion, for he gives the illusion of spontaneity by the most elaborate use of digression, anti-climax and diminuendo. We feel we are reading not fiction but autobiography. This method of narrative serves also to suggest a philosophic view of man's place in the universe. His life is a little longer than a nightingale's, a little shorter than a willow's. The most sentient of creatures, he is the most deserving of compassion. Years before people learnt from Darwin to moderate their anthropocentric ideas, Turgenev saw man as a part of Nature. He was, I fancy, the first novelist to do this. In *A Sportsman's Sketches*, the forest and the steppe are not a background of scenery, but an environment in which *homo sapiens* is one of the more uncommon species.

I think that Turgenev never rose higher than in these first short stories, though *Fathers and Children* may be considered equally successful more ambitious. I hope soon to write about his other books. Meanwhile, I should like to end with one of the many images from *A Sportsman's Sketches* that linger in the reader's memory. Count Orlov-Tchesmensky kept tumbler-pigeons of a specially choice breed:

> He would come out into the court, sit down in an armchair, and order them to let loose the pigeons; and his men would stand all round on the roofs with guns to keep off the hawks. A large silver basin of water used to be placed at the count's feet, and he looked at the pigeons reflected in the water.

Even so Turgenev offers to our enchanted eyes life on the wing, caught in the perfectly shaped and burnished vessel of his writing.

Raymond Mortimer

Others Are Waiting!

The demand for this paper is far greater than the supplies available within our paper ration. Are you prepared to forward your copy when you have read it? If so, kindly let the Publisher know and he will put you in touch with a member of the Forces or some other person unable to obtain a copy.

MISS SAYERS'S CHRISTIAN DRAMA

The Man Born to be King. By Dorothy L. Sayers. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

Here is the text of the twelve plays on the life of Christ written by Miss Dorothy Sayers and given by the B.B.C. at intervals between December 1941 and October 1942. The play-cycle itself, considered as drama, has merits and defects which I shall come to in a moment; what is more interesting, perhaps, is the situation that produced them.

The theatre in England, as everyone knows, belongs to the devil. Christ may not walk there, though there is nothing, I believe, to prevent his appearing as a spotlight or in the guise of a modern preacher. The lodger of the third-floor back and the bumbling guide to new worlds in *Outward Bound* show how far the dramatist may go in this direction; and that isn't far for a stage that has produced *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. An atmosphere of dingy furnished rooms and commercial travelling is held to be reverent. Now there was once a good enough reason for this taboo, which was that the various churches, in their services, had a monopoly of the Christ drama. The first or second lesson, however badly read, could compare (artistically speaking) with Shakespeare; and people had to go to church or take the consequences. But belief of that obligatory kind no longer exists. Empty churches are trying indeed to attract an audience by giving concerts and gramophone recitals; they hope to win back a little of their flock through the arts, and at the same time they are relaxing their hold on what was once exclusively church property, the drama of Christ. This news may reach the Lord Chamberlain fifty years hence.

In the meantime, there is the B.B.C., which doles out everything from church services to music-hall programmes, and the notion that Christ should be heard but not seen suits them very well. The performing rights of any play with this theme are now automatically theirs. Quite rightly they have taken advantage of the fact. The suggestion that this play-cycle should be written and broadcast came, not from Miss Sayers, but from Dr. Welch, director of religious broadcasting at the B.B.C., and he has written a foreword to *The Man Born to be King*. At the first mention of the scheme there was an outcry; the societies that object to theatres opening on Sundays except to concert troupes did their best to stop Dr. Welch and Miss Sayers from desecrating the Sabbath in new ways. But the B.B.C. had strong church backing, and the plays—after an initial pause for reconsideration—were given. It was a victory for good sense, though I am afraid that the B.B.C. would be as quick to ban a play by Mr. Shaw on this subject as it has been eager to encourage Miss Sayers.

I am sorry to say that I missed the actual performances. However, the plays, with their studio directions, are published now to be read, and it is possible to measure their success or failure; in one respect, even, one is helped by the book form, because the cycle can be read and judged as a whole, which the spacing of the original performances must have made difficult. On the credit side, then, there is Miss Sayers's craftsmanship, which is insisted upon several times in her introduction. She is an exceedingly clever woman. She possesses the faith, and has acquired the erudition, necessary in her opinion for such a task. "The history and the theology of Christ are one thing: His life is theology in action, and the drama of His life is dogma shown as dramatic action"—that is the orthodox Catholic point of view. But is nothing more needed than craftsmanship, faith and theological understanding? Imagination, for example, on its higher levels? No, Miss Sayers seems to answer (and it is a point that must surely have troubled her); with so tremendous a subject you don't need to be a genius, the theme will inspire author and director and actors, just as the committee that produced the Authorised Version was inspired. I don't mean to suggest that Miss Sayers makes far-fetched claims for these plays of her's, but that is her general attitude, and Mr. Val Gielgud in his Production Note speaks of "the very singular atmosphere which the plays in rehearsal seemed to generate." The same atmosphere doesn't seem to communicate itself in reading, but possibly that is because its appeal is not to the imagination alone, but to imagination plus faith. Without the second we shall be extended, interested, curious, sometimes moved and sometimes let down by the fertility of Miss Sayers's invention. For she has had to invent, on a huge scale. Each of the plays took, I suppose, from forty to fifty minutes to perform: just under ten hours, say, altogether. This makes *Peer Gynt*, and even Goethe's *Faust*, look tiny. The Gospel story has been enlarged, mainly, in two ways. The first is political; Roman Empire, Hebrew kingdom and the search for a revolutionary and national saviour enlarge the scene. The character of Judas, in opposition to Christ, is the second. Otherwise, with a good deal of skill and using the Shavian technique for putting history on the stage, Miss Sayers is faithful to the figures in the New Testament. There is some subsidiary invention. Miss Sayers has done little more with the character of Christ than make Him humanly approachable—a difficult enough feat, goodness knows; she emphasises His practical and humorous side, and ignores the cryptic aloofness and the fits of anger which at one moment may be directed against money-changers in the temple, but at the next against a fig-tree that won't bear fruit out of season. She enjoys the miracles in a sensible, bustling way—good routine work efficiently done, like modern miracles of surgery—and shows the disciples, with the exception of John and Judas, as simple men dazzled by their leader. The character of Judas she has had to create out of nothing, since all we are told in the New Testament is that Judas plotted, betrayed for money, and hanged himself. Judas becomes, in Miss Sayers's imagination, an intellectual. The quickest and most intelligent of the disciples, he is the first to comprehend the nature of Christ's teaching and he only turns against his master when he believes that Christ is betraying His heavenly mission in a search for political power. This misconception is the hinge on which the plot of *The Man Born to be King* eventually turns. It involves such ingenuities as the choice of entering Jerusalem on a horse or an ass to give a political signal to revolutionaries, the misinterpretation of Christ's phrases as Judas becomes increasingly suspicious, and the final discovery by Judas that he has blundered atrociously, when it is too late.

Ingenuities that belong (I am sorry to have to say this) more to the detective story than to a drama of Christ's life. They are, like the clues and red herrings at which Miss Sayers has shown herself so adept, tricky and not much more; and since their appearance coincides with the dramatic climax of the plays their effect, for me, is one of shattering disillusion. In a detective story you can have every character both ways, here you can't; and either Judas was far more stupid to begin with than Miss Sayers makes out or he was as intelligent as she says, in which case he wouldn't have made the incredible blunders attributed to him. Judas, in a sense, is the most important character in *The Man Born to be King*, because he represents the new dramatic element introduced by Miss Sayers, and he turns out, as I have said, to be a trick of the plot.

The other shortcomings are less harmful. As a rule Miss Sayers manages her characters with a brisk verisimilitude, and the speech modulations from current colloquialism ("My word this is exciting," says James on the Mount of Olives) to the inspired utterances of Jesus are achieved with considerable tact. Two-thirds of the play-cycle, in fact, are successful in the manner of *St. Joan*—though lacking Shaw's genius even at its second best. Whatever criticisms one may make of *The Man Born to be King* it is a thorough, intelligent, skilful and courageous piece of work; and I hope, apart from other things, that it may help to open one more of the doors hitherto locked by taboo.

G. W. Stonier

PANTECHNICON

New Writing and Daylight. Summer 194 *Hogarth Press.* 8s. 6d.

It is very difficult to review this publicatio its range is so wide and its quantities and quali vary so sharply. The critic looks for the autho tative voice or the common denominator, and in stead, he opens a book packed with diverse litera samples. French, Russians, Czechs, Pole Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, Sout Africans and a Portuguese bring their contributions. There are the Louis MacNeice translations of Aragon, an N.F.S. documentary b Henry Green, an account of an attack at sea, philosophical fable by William Sansom; an things like these stand side by side with article on the literary habits of war correspondents, th Chinese and Czech theatres, a Welsh miner's autobiography and a very valuable examination of th position of French writers during the war, th first to be given with any thoroughness an authority in this country, by Mr. Raymond Mo timer. That list represents a mere tenth of the contributions and says little of the poetry, thoug here four poems by Roy Fuller have a marke lead of the rest. The book is a pantechnicon.

My notes on it run something like this. Henry Green: the platitudes and pleasures of documentary. We see a group of browned-off firemen talking at a bar. No character emerges, no point is made—except that they would be cheered up by another blitz. This is raw material but the talk is accurately reported, and (just as important) the subjects of talk are right. Mr. Green, like other naturalistic writers, breaks down two conventions: the convention of which, say, W. W. Jacobs became a master, in which reminiscence is poured out of a key, stock character: "'Women,' said the night watchman, etc., etc." Exit the droll. The other convention is a very recent one that popular talk need be about nothing as long as it is popular talk. But when we listen to it, we see that popular talk has certain and established patterns and recurrent subjects: the nasty but harmless insinuation; silly arguments: how many minutes has the war been on? Was it Sammy who lived at No. 17 or was it Wally? And then the creepy story. I am glad to see Mr. Green catching the creepy note. Cockney soldiers in the country enjoy kidding themselves about owls, graveyards and night noises: "I fawt it was a bloke, it was a norse." These stories get the best audiences among the bored. Mr. Green sees that popular talk is not conversation, but a kind of acting or talking for effect. Of course, there is no need to read this kind of thing: you can go out to the nearest pub and hear it. What one is interested in is the next stage to which a writer can carry this kind of material.

My next notes are about William Sansom's fable, *In the Maze*. It is on the long side and is a trifle laboured, but it is very originally conceived and (most important) is suave and vivid. I am tired of the "new world" and "aerodrome" allegories. Mr. Sansom ingeniously uses a maze into which human beings advance with shears in hand, cutting the patterns that please them. Alas, they are obsessed with the use of the intellect and the intellect is obsessed with the straight line. It cuts logically, going the shortest distance between two points. No one has discovered the curve, or the virtue of taking the longer way between two points. I enjoy conundrums of this kind when they are well-written and Mr. Sansom succeeds. He is too philosophical to consider the breakdown of the intellect—the happy ground of surrealism and the psychologists—and that leaves the sinister quality, the sense of shadow, out of his fable. This kind of writing is in danger of becoming an exercise, a chess problem in which everything is black or white. Another danger is the temptation to come to the comfort of moral conclusions. A fable or an allegory, for my taste, should leave one ridiculed, reprimanded, punished or very, very uneasy. Aesop or Bunyan is one possibility: Kafka's *The Great Wall of China* is the other.

I enjoyed a Leningrad story by Tithonov ecause of the novelty of hearing a Russian riter describe the artist's dilemma during a war ithout denouncing him as *petit bourgeois* for aving a dilemma. I was glad to see Mr. Lehann bumping off the war correspondents. It tragic that imaginative writers have not been ven the same official facilities which have been anted to the painters. The object of the thorities—who, one suspects, do not see the fference—is to employ imaginative writers as urnalists. They are poor journalists. I was uch instructed by Mr. Raymond Mortimer's ticle on the position of French writers. He scovers eight main groups of opinion, emphasisg the difference between the collaborators of ris and those of Vichy. He then applies these tegories to the chief names, warning us that at esent it is still impossible to have *all* the idence, and that even when it is black or shady e should avoid Pharisaical superiority. "If ngland had been occupied, can we doubt that e, too, should have spawned a few collaborars?" The essay is marked by many felicities criticism—Bernanos "uses language like a me-thrower"—and its scrupulous presentation the facts and its breadth of judgment are very luable at a time when one is easily carried ay by compulsive and summary views. One ntence I hope will be remembered, for I think it presses an instinctive attitude of all English mirers of French literature: Mr. Mortimer rites, after noting the lamentable behaviour of ontherlant and Drieu la Rochelle: "Neverthess if Montherlant and Drieu la Rochelle are ecuted, as seems likely, I shall regret it, for I elieve them to be disinterested as well as urageous, and no country can afford to lose ch gifted artists."

V. S. PRITCHETT

BEFORE PEARL HARBOUR

okyo Record. By OTTO D. TOLISCHUS. *Hamilton.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

When Mr. Otto Tolischus sailed into Tokyo y on February 7th, 1941, the atmosphere was ready uncomfortable. For years correspondt for the *New York Times* and the London *imes* in Berlin, he was expelled by the Nazi thorities and at once accepted an offer "to take look at the other end of the Berlin-Tokyo Axis." e wanted to know "how much truth there was the story that the Nazis had taken over some their mystic ideas from the Japanese." The sult is *Tokyo Record*, a personal diary as revealing about Fascist psychology in Japan as Ambassador Dodd's diary was for a similar period of war preparations in Berlin.

On his fourth day in the country Mr. Tolischus attended the 2,601st anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Empire. It recalled to him the "show and mass and sound and fury" of the Nazi rallies, but the Japanese function was, in comparison, solemn and religious. In the afternoon this religious devotion took on its political aspect; the Black Dragon Society was especially prominent; the army, the schools, youth, and factory workers marched past the Palace and listened to an oration by the Home Minister, Hiranuma, who dwelt upon the sanctity of the Japanese Throne and Japanese Imperial Rule as "an extension of Heaven." As time went on he became more and more conscious of the similarity between Japan and Germany; the deliberate effort of a ruthless minority "to organise and regiment the nation for total war and world conquest by staging a deliberate revolt against reason";

> The same execration of rationalism, intellectualism, liberalism and democracy, the same purge of such elements, from the governmental, social, economic and educational structure . . . the same regimentation of the masses behind the war machine . . . the same exaltation of a tribal nationalism based on the idea of a god-descended race or a super-race, the same proclamation of blind obedience to a God-Emperor or an almost deified Führer, the same emphasis on a male state based on the subordination of women in the name of the family, the same substituting of a tribal collectivism in place of individualism, and above all, the same revival of the savage ethics and morals of ancient savage gods, as best suited for the promotion of the elementary instinct to fight.

There was, however, one important difference. The Nazi *Weltanschauung* was a synthetic product. The roots of Shinto and the Imperial tradition were deep in the Japanese character. An unbroken tradition going straight back to the age of savagery was preserved in their education and military training.

Mr. Tolischus had many opportunities to watch the Japanese mind at work, cunningly, ruthlessly, skilfully planning war, mentally conditioning the nation for a more expansive warfare than it had ever known before. Everything led up to the attack on December 7th, 1941; the mock mediation between Thailand and Indo-China, the complete victory of the Army and Navy in the Government, the rapid growth of censorship, the formation of the "Great Japan East Asia League" with its vast propaganda machinery to prepare the way for the white man's defeat; the concentration of industry, the mobilisation of man-power, and lastly, the formation of the Tojo military dictatorship in October, after which war was only a matter of time, and the "peace" discussions with President Roosevelt for the next two months only a diplomatic facade.

Mr. Tolischus arrived in Tokyo in February, 1941, and was arrested by the Japanese on December 8th, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbour. Shortly after his arrival he was entertained, with two other American correspondents, at a private lunch given by Matsuoka, the Japanese Foreign Minister. At this lunch Mr. Matsuoka proposed what Mr. Tolischus afterwards realised amounted to a Far Eastern "Munich." He suggested that Mr. Roosevelt should "advise" Chiang Kai-shek to enter into direct peace negotiations with Mr. Matsuoka and should back up this "advice" with the threat of ending American aid to Chungking. Matsuoka offered in return to give better terms to Chiang Kai-shek than he had to the Chinese Quisling, Wang Ching-wei, and to withdraw all Japanese from China after peace was restored. "What about the Alliance with Germany and Italy?" Mr. Tolischus asked. "I wrote the Treaty myself," was the answer, and then Mr. Matsuoka continued, "I can tell you that there is nothing in that Treaty compelling Japan to go to war in the Pacific." Later in the conversation he suggested that "if Japan and the United States could work together, we could control the world." Meanwhile in London, Mr. Churchill rejected an offer of mediation in any part of the world made by Mr. Matsuoka to Mr. Eden and assured Japan that Britain was concentrating on her war against Germany and that British measures in the Pacific were purely defensive.

Matsuoka had drawn blank; neither the United States nor Great Britain was in a mood to succumb to his bluff. He spoke his real mind in the Diet a few days later when he declared that the white man must return Oceania to the Asiatics and that Japanese must be permitted to settle in it. A week later, he went off to Berlin and Moscow. Mr. Tolischus wrote on April 9th that Matsuoka hoped to get a settlement in Moscow "to eliminate the Russian menace from Japan's northern flank. In case of complication in the Pacific, this would free Japan's hand for her projected southward advance." He launched a small peace offensive himself and

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suggested that Matsuoka should now pay a visit to Washington. The sight of America's war preparations, her potential strength, might give Matsuoka cause to think again. But the Japanese launched more peace terms; in reply, "Sir Robert Craigie served notice that the British Empire was not yet ready to take a back seat for the Axis." Matsuoka then suggested that Roosevelt and Cordell Hull should visit Japan.

And so the story goes on until the Japanese were ready to strike. Mr. Tolischus has made an illuminating contribution to our knowledge of Japan by describing the atmosphere of those summer months while both sides played for time. He does not criticise America's foreign policy; the story of the part played by big business in determining the appeasement policy of the United States, the Netherlands and the British Empire must be told by some one equally close to events in Washington. One of the incidental values of Mr. Tolischus's account is the insight we gain into the psychology of the Japanese. The White world pays to-day for its contempt of the coloured. When Mr. Tolischus was arrested, for prison and torture, his warder spat at him, explaining as he did so that Americans had spat at him in the United States and it was now Japan's turn to do the spitting. DOROTHY WOODMAN

THE POWER OF SILENCE

Le Silence de la Mer. By VERCORS. Les Cahiers du Silence. *Hachette.* 3s. 6d.

Under the title *Les Cahiers du Silence*, a committee of distinguished Frenchmen in England are publishing a series of new French books. No good Frenchman is free to speak in his own captive country, but it is hoped that manuscripts can be smuggled out of France, and a voice thus given to those imprisoned in silence. The first volume in this series is a story, *Le Silence de la Mer*, that has been published in France clandestinely by the "Editions de Minuit." The author calls himself Vercors; who he is one does not know; and though interior evidence suggests a name, it would be imprudent to make public one's guess, lest it should prove correct. One thing can be declared with confidence; this story is a masterpiece.

The narrator lives with his niece, somewhere, it seems, in the Charente country. A young German officer is billeted on them, a musician whose behaviour is discreet and sensitive. But each evening he comes in to talk to his unwilling hosts of his love for France and for the light radiated by French civilisation. He speaks French well, though not without mistakes. The Nazis, he explains, have noble ideas, but the Germans left to themselves always suffer from a vein of cruelty. "Fortunately, they are no longer by themselves, they are in France. France will cure them. And I tell you something, they know this. They know that France will teach them to be human, great and pure." But for this love is necessary, a mutual love; and he tells the story of Beauty and the Beast. Evening after evening his hosts listen to this idealist in unrelenting silence, a silence that the German understands and respects. After six months he goes on leave to Paris. On his return, "You have got to forget everything I have said. . . . I have talked to them. . . . They laughed at me. . . . There is no hope, none. . . . Already French books are not allowed to go outside France. . . . They will put out the light." The next morning he departs, for in his disillusionment he has applied to serve on the lethal plains of Russia.

This gross summary can give no notion of the power the story reveals. Written with supreme economy, in short sentences, and without comment, it is enveloped in an atmosphere of anguish. The German is made so sympathetic that one longs for the two French characters to break their silence, but it is only at the end that the niece relents, with the one word, "Adieu." The relationship between these two who are young—the officer feels something near to love—is never defined. No book inspired by mere hatred (always blind and stupid) could supply so devastating an indictment. There are good Germans, but they are deluded or else in despair—and in either case impotent. That is the tragic theme of this delicate and overpowering story, which avoids any explicit statement of a moral. One earnestly hopes that it will be put into English by a writer who can do justice to its beauty and its strength.

R. M.

Horizon. *June.* 1s. 6d.

More and more effectively *Horizon* champions the intellect, and its attendant spirits, wit and taste. Mr. Cyril Connolly opens the current number of his magazine with a noble tribute to France as the modern country incomparably most fertile intellectually and artistically. He has never written more from the heart or with greater seriousness. France is the subject, too, of a dazzling story about the aristocracy in which Violet Trefusis, who used to write novels in French, shows herself equally a mistress of English. Mr. Poznanski protests against what he calls the new "Holy Alliance" of great powers seeking to reduce the small countries to semi-colonial status. Mr. Quennell continues his account of Boswell, recently discovered material presented with exquisite skill and insight. Mr. Hendy writes well about Paul Nash, but an essay on Barbara Hepworth only makes the difficult more unapproachable; and in a series of poems Mr. George Barker attains new depths of obscurity.

Roof over Britain. *H.M. Stationery Office.* 9d.

This "official story of the A.A. defences, 1939-1942" maintains the standard of M.O.I. publications made in conjunction with the Services. The new format, though less opulent than before, allows still for a wealth of photographs. Some of these, withheld at the time, are striking: for example, the picture of an A.A. battery firing at night, which not only sent tongues of flame 25ft. into the air but kicked the camera flying and knocked out two of the photographer's teeth. The text gives a brief historical sketch of A.A. defence in Britain and some description of defences—balloons, guns, searchlights, observer corps.—during and since the Blitz. Many surprising facts emerge. A searchlight of 210,000,000 candle-power probes the sky; the Bofors fires anything up to 120 two-pound shells a minute to a height of 6,000 feet; in the first two years of the war A.A. guns were responsible for destroying nearly 600 enemy aircraft over this country. Those who still think of our ground defences as a heartening and sometimes dangerous noise that follows the sirens, will do well to read *Roof Over Britain* and learn what those defences have accomplished and the vast organisation behind them.

Week-end Competitions

No. 701

Set by Roger Marvell

Many competitors will remember from their childhood the rhymed advice to young shooters, beginning: "Never, never let your gun Pointed be at anyone . . ." The usual prizes are offered for twelve lines (in the same metre) of advice to children learning bridge, film-acting or the piano.

RULES—

Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, July 19th.

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ESULTS OF COMPETITION No. 698

t by C. Day Lewis

The speeches of eminent men at School Speech Days are traditionally platitudinous, soporific and false. The usual prizes are offered for the opening paragraphs (not more than 200 words) of a speech, to be given on such an occasion by an eminent Old Boy or Visitor, which—without actually creating a public scandal—should startle and hold the attention of the parents, the staff and, above all, the boys.

eport by C. Day Lewis

Phantasies of grandeur must assail even the least noble minds from time to time. One of my own pet ntasies is to be standing up there on the dais—rene certainly, but with dynamite on my tongue—l set to drop a few block-busters on that congested es of adult and adolescent faces. I dream of saying, r example, that—although as a boy I excelled at every nd of athletic sport—I consider the system of organ-ed games a pernicious one, and as ineffective as a aginot Line against the immoral practices it was signed to hold at bay—practices which, in any case, e not a tenth as immoral as those by which certain embers of the Governing Body reached their present ninence. I would continue by recalling the fact that, hen at school myself, I won all the prizes, and did so sheer brilliance rather than by hard work: at the me time, I would assure my audience that it is per-nal charm, not brilliance, which gets you places in e greater world; and remind them that success has worm in its heart, that failure is seedy, that the only ly happy man is the artist who is not concerned th either, and that (for all healthy-minded boys) it is e Tuck-shop, not the chapel, which is the centre o hool life.

Phantasy, all phantasy, I need hardly say. And, s, like many of the entries I have been reading, it eaks the condition I laid down that the speech ould stop short of creating a public scandal. The mented Mr. Wodehouse set an all-time high for the ndalous Speech-Day speech in the episode where rtie Wooster, blind drunk, gives away the prizes a local grammar school and bitterly insults the boy o has won the scripture prize. I wanted some-ing different, something more subtle—the kind of ntly-parachuting-down, delayed action block-busters ich Sir Max Beerbohm or Mr. E. M. Forster might ease on such an occasion. The nearest we got to s was J. P. C.'s contribution, which opens on just e right note of dangerous suavity but tails off a bit it goes on. Other competitors opened strongly with ite serious remarks, but soon forgot that they were dressing an audience largely composed of boys (or girls), and began to talk in abstractions—sensible, even startling ones, I admit—but they instantly lost their grip on all except the prefects. Such a one was Geoffrey Vickers, who began admirably, "The biggest difference between us who are old and you who are young is that we shall be dead sooner than you": he is runner-up to the three prize-winners. Good serious speeches came also from P. J. T. P. and Sheila Knowles, while Sir Henry McAnally struck a manly blow for the old School Tie which was quite refreshing amidst the prevailing tones of liberalism and license.

Several competitors went off on the "glittering prizes" tack, and adjured the boys to go flat out for Success. The best of these were "Uncivil Servant" ("Ignore the teaching of your spiritual pastors and masters. Be original; be individual; life is a game of solitaire.") and E. W. F. ("Strive relentlessly for the topmost branch, making certain that it is strong enough to bear you. If it isn't, leave it to the next man, and you will watch him crash while you remain master of the situation.") Both of these, I fear, did themselves out of glittering prizes of a guinea by just overstepping the mark: their speeches would surely have created public scandal. Other contributions, in one vein or another, which gave pleasure, came from Rev. J. A. Wurtzburg, D. B. K., Sir Robert Witt, Joseph Baguley, J. V. Bryant, F. M. C., "Catkin," and A. M. P.

Well, I expect you are all dying to stampede out of here and stuff yourselves with strawberries on the headmaster's lawn: so I will bring my remarks to a close and address myself to the pleasant task of presenting the prizes. A guinea each is awarded to J. P. C., whom I have already mentioned, and to Allan M. Laing, whose good advice (particularly at the end) is irresistible. First prize of two guineas goes to "Towanbucket," whose speech combines good sense with panache, and has just that touch of eccentricity so endearing to the young.

My Dear Boys,—I was once a boy at this school: I am now a major-general. Now wait a minute: don't applaud yet. Cheers are easy. Thinking is hard. I want you to think. You young devils probably think a major-general is a little tin god. You're wrong. Armies, my young friends, are a regrettable necessity. One of these days sensible men will find a way of doing without them. Till that happens, major-generals will still be wanted; but nothing can gloss over the fact that they are the leaders of a profession which would not exist but for human folly. (You don't applaud: I hope that means you're thinking). Now why am I a major-general? I'll tell you. I was too lazy to think. I let my parents and masters make up my mind for me, then just put on blinkers and did my best. All the same, compared with a successful writer, a devoted doctor, a skilled musician or painter, a major-general is pretty small beer. Those other chaps make things: he just blows 'em up. Chew on that for a moment while I take a dekko at my notes

Towanbucket

The opening paragraphs of a speech by Lady Boars-Hill (wife of Sir Bodley Boars-Hill, K.C., M.P.) at Upshott College, Speech Day, July, 1943:

Unfortunately my husband cannot be here to-day—he developed laryngitis at the Old Bailey recently, an old boy's case funnily enough. But I feel a great personal interest in the college myself: I was at Lady Margaret's School just across the way—you all know it—and indeed I first met my husband while he was still here. So you see, I know the College very well, and Sir Bodley and I agree that our school days were the happiest of all—brief though they were.

Of course the School has changed, but I know the old traditions—they carry on. Only the other day we were chatting about old Upshott friends of ours. It's funny, you know, to see what sort of man the boy has turned out to be. Bad starters making good—a good start meaning a bad end: very strange, and encouraging. There was one brilliant all-rounder—and my husband met him only last week; outside the Divorce Court incidentally. And a Founder Scholar we knew—another sad case. But then, of course, there's a Cabinet Minister: at school we'd have counted him out altogether. Why, I remember

J. P. C.

As I understand it, the fact that I have reached a certain eminence in the public eye entitles me to offer good advice. I shall enjoy that. As a great comic writer once remarked: "To do good is noble: to teach others to do good is nobler—and no trouble." I shall begin by shaking an admonitory finger at your Headmaster. My advice to you, Sir, is: "Don't presume on your position. Never forget that although a school without a headmaster is conceivable, a school without scholars is a contradiction in terms. Practise a little decent humility before the rising generation." To the Staff I would add: "Don't be afraid to admit occasional ignorance. However encyclopaedic your knowledge, every boy in every class knows something you don't." Proceeding on the same lines, my advice to parents is: "Cut out the patronising mother-knows-best twaddle. Unquestioning obedience is the conduct of slaves." As for you, boys, yours is the hardest task. I ask you, in the face of powerful attempts to mould your characters, to remain boys. I know you can't help sometimes being little devils, but for heaven's sake, resist the temptation to be little men. Don't misunderstand me.

Allan M. Laing

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he annual general meeting of the "Shell" ansport and Trading Co. Ltd. was held July 6th in London, the Rt. Hon. Viscount arsted, M.C., presiding.

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am still not in a position to reveal any ails of the operation of the group's fleets, I am sure you would not wish me to let s annual review go by without once again ording our appreciation of what the up's fleet has done and is continuing to . Nothing could illustrate more clearly magnificent behaviour of our officers and n than the number of decorations awarded them. Our marine department is keeping ly abreast of the times. Research is con-ntly going on to ensure that such new sels as we are building now and those we e to build after the war shall be of the t up-to-date type.

In the United States in 1942 industry was geared to produce the maximum quantities of war materials, the demands for which were of such magnitude as to challenge its resourcefulness to the fullest extent. The oil industry has carried out its part of the war programme with vigour and efficiency, and in this connection the Shell Union Group of Companies has been able to make a notable contribution to the war effort. Shell Union's trading results for 1942 are comparable with the previous year, in spite of the many difficulties it has had to face and the extensive operating adjustments made to cope with changing conditions.

In Venezuela those companies in which we are interested have recently been carrying on negotiations relative to a proposed new Petroleum Law and to modifications in the terms of existing concessions. Those negotiations have been concluded and the new Petroleum Law passed. Whilst the cost of Venezuelan production will certainly increase, the Venezuelan Government on their side will grant new concessions with extended life.

Our operations in other countries, particularly in Colombia, Egypt, and Trinidad, are developing satisfactorily. In Mexico there is still no development to report affecting the properties of the Mexican Eagle Oil Co.

Turning to the staff, a year ago 164 male and 17 female members of our British staff were in territory overrun by the Japanese. We have now accounted for all of them except 17. Of these, I am sorry to say, we know definitely that four were killed in the defence of Hong Kong, and four others, who left at the final evacuation from Singapore, have not yet been heard of. We do not know the actual whereabouts of the remaining nine, but we believe them to be safe in territory from which no news has yet been allowed to come through. All our staff except one have been repatriated from Japan, and a certain number also from China.

The report was adopted.

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